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Kent on Sunday

www.kentnews.co.uk March 26, 2017

East edition No 757

GOVERNMENT

Super council dealt major setback

Doubts now as to whether east Kent merger will ever go ahead

HEALTH

Alarm as doctors quit hospital

What is the future for one of county's major sites?

ATTACK

Terrorist's Kentish roots

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COURT

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Shocking, yes, but let's not lose sight of reality

THERE has been much debate this week about the security around our high profile buildings - with many suggesting Wednesday's attack in Westminster is a sign that once again we are unprepared to combat the ever present threat of terrorism.

Yet the truth is the swift action of armed police at the gates of the Palace of Westminster proved sufficient to prevent the intruder.

As for the carnage on Westminster Bridge, the reality is that you simply cannot police against the sort of madness which consumes these people. Our roads and paths cannot all be walled in.

We live in a society where the threat of terror is very real. We also live in a society where the reality of such incidents are few and far between yet the fear outweighs the reality.

That is not to in anyway diminish what happened on Wednesday, but it is important we all realise one mindless thug - and let us give them no more fitting title than that - does not represent anyone other than his own misguided views. Nor should we think his actions are the tip of an iceberg on a collision course to sink us.

The small-minded among us may well once again point to those of a certain religion having a responsibility, but the truth is this was just one lunatic and you will never be able to protect a nation from one person hellbent on violence. That these incidents are so very rare in this country should remind us that we are actually well protected and, as harsh as this may sound, we must all simply keep our fingers crossed we never find ourselves in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Yes, what happened is frightening. That is, after all, the very essence of terrorism, but it should never shake our grasp on reality.

Editor **Chris Britcher**

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HOW TO CONTACT US...

Editor: Chris Britcher
Email chris.britcher@archant.co.uk
Address: Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford TN23 1PP
Editorial: News: 01233 653475
Sport/Leisure: 01233 653479
Email editorial@kosmedia.co.uk
Advertising:
Jobs/Notices: 01233 653461
Business: 01233 653461
Email appointments@kosmedia.co.uk
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Stories which made the headlines @kentnews.co.uk during the past week

Christmas Eve crash at Costa driver sentenced

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

CARNAGE: Scene of the crash, left, David Lord, top right, and victim Valerie Deakin, bottom right

AN 87-year-old has been sentenced after "wrongly pressing the accelerator" on his car and smashing into a Costa coffee shop in Westerham on Christmas Eve, killing a woman inside.

David Lord appeared at Maidstone Crown Court on Thursday having previously pleaded guilty to a charge of causing death by dangerous driving.

Lord was sentenced to 22 months imprisonment, suspended for two years. He was ordered to pay costs of £1,500 and also disqualified from driving for five years and will have to take an extended test should he wish to drive again.

Lord, of Croydon Road, Westerham had been at the wheel of his Audi A4 on December 24, 2015 when the incident happened at around 10.30am. His Audi left the carriageway and careered into the Costa, at the junction with London Road.

Valerie Deakin, aged 74 and from Rye in Sussex had been sitting at a table in the coffee shop and was struck by the car. She died at the scene from her injuries. Five other people were hospitalised.

Sergeant Glyn Walker said: "David Lord's car was rigorously checked by experts for any defects, but there were none. We believe he simply lost control of the vehicle by wrongly pressing the accelerator, causing it to leave the road at speed and with tragic consequences. Mrs Deakin's death has had a profound impact on the families of both the victim and the driver and I hope today's sentence will at least provide some closure."

A statement by Mrs Deakin's family said: "Our family was changed forever under horrendous circumstances. That morning, we were looking forward to spending a joyful Christmas together. By early afternoon we were a family in shock, utterly devastated.

"We have lost the kindest, most compassionate friend and mother, who we love beyond measure. Her death has left a huge void, and we are still trying to come to terms with this. Mr Lord's actions have affected many people, causing physical and mental injury, pain, confusion, shock and grief. Numerous people narrowly escaped death or serious injury that day. This incident was entirely avoidable and should not have happened. There are no words to express how utterly heartbroken we are at the loss of our lovely mum. The pain is immeasurable."

Despite £26m injection into social care, KCC leader says gap remains

A £26m cash injection from central government won't solve Kent County Council's social care crisis, its leader has warned.

After much lobbying from KCC and the county's Conservative MPs, chancellor Philip Hammond announced in his budget earlier this month that £2bn would be made available for local authorities over the next three years.

KCC received one of the highest proportions of this total, but the government funding, as well as a four per cent council tax hike approved last month, still leaves County Hall well short of being able to fully cope with increasing care pressures.

Leader Paul Carter said: "We're delighted we've received this additional money to fund social care.

"Providers have been under enormous pressure as the ageing population grows and we work extremely hard to deliver a quality service in very difficult times.

"We have long lobbied government for more money and a fairer distribution of that money to counties that desperately need it.

"Let's be clear, whilst we have been given additional funding, the gap still remains.

"Sustainable funding for social care will continue to be a challenge for Kent County Council but I'm pleased that the government has announced a Green Paper looking into sustainable funding for the future."

Adult social care is the biggest spend for KCC at around 40 per cent of the council's overall budget, with approximately £364m to be spent on it this year alone.

Over the past six years, KCC has made savings of half a billion pounds across the whole range of council services to address the challenge of rising spending and reduced government funding.

The adult social care budget, as a proportion of overall KCC spend, has continued to rise.

String of cat deaths triggers warning over 'poisoning'

POLICE have issued a warning after a number of cats were found dead in Tonbridge after appearing to have eaten poison.

At least four cats are reported to have died since March 11 - all from homes in the Lambs Bank area.

Sergeant Jo Mott said: ''There is no evidence at this stage to suggest that these cats may have been deliberately poisoned, however, we would urge owners to be vigilant about what their animals are drinking.''

Owners and householders are reminded not to leave open containers of any hazardous or chemicals substances by their properties.

The RSPCA confirmed there had also been anecdotal reports of other cats dying in the same area.

Terror attack delays Lower Thames Crossing decision

A LONG-awaited decison on the Lower Thames Crossing was delayed this week following the terrorist attacks in Westminster.

It had been widely expected that Option C would be announced as the choice - which would see a tunnel bored under the river to the east of Gravesham - on Thursday.

But the dramatic events of Wednesday appear to have further delayed the official confirmation. It is now feared purdah rules - which prevent big potentially vote-swaying announcements being made prior to elections - could force it to be delayed until after the county council polls in May.

For full reaction from our MPs to the attacks, plus a profile of the Kent-born terrorist turn to pages 14-19.

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seven days

Stories which made the headlines @kentnews.co.uk during the past week

Churchyard rapist handed 12-year jail sentence

A 33-year-old man who dragged a woman into a churchyard and raped her, insisting he "loved her" has been jailed for 12 years.

George Orwa, formerly of Agate Court in Sittingbourne, was sentenced at Maidstone Crown Court. He will also serve three years on licence.

In the early hours of August 14 last year, he followed his victim after meeting her in a pub as she walked home and dragged her into the grounds of St Michael's Church on Sittingbourne High Street.

His victim, in her 30s, managed to struggle free and raise the alarm. Det sgt Adam Marshall said: "This was an horrific attack on a woman who had been out enjoying a night with her friend."

Justice secretary reveals Rochester prison set for massive redevelopment

By Hayden Smith
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

ROCHESTER prison is set for a multi-million pound renovation as the government unveils its latest push to reform the crisis-hit jail system.

Currently used as a young males offender institution, it will mean temporary closure as staff and inmates are shifted to other jails while the work takes place.

Rochester is one of four sites announced by justice secretary Liz Truss on Wednesday to see reformed facilities created as part of the prison estate.

Other sites include Full Sutton in Yorkshire, Hindley in Wigan and Port Talbot in South Wales.

The aim is to create up to 10,000 modern prison places by 2020.

It is the latest step in a £1.3 billion revamp of the estate first launched under Ms Truss's predecessor, Michael Gove, amid concerns a number of facilities were overcrowded and run-down.

MINISTER: Liz Truss

The Ministry of Justice said final decisions on the new jails would be subject to planning approval, value for money and affordability.

Plans to close and sell Victorian prisons were first mooted in 2015 but so far only HMP Holloway in north London has shut.

Announcements on further jail closures are expected later in the year.

Ms Truss said: "We cannot hope to reduce re-offending until we build prisons that are places of reform where hard work and self-improvement flourish.

"Outdated prisons, with dark corridors and cramped conditions, will not help offenders turn their back on crime - nor do they provide our professional and dedicated prison officers with the right tools or environment to do their job effectively."

But Peter Dawson, director of the Prison Reform Trust, said: "This massive investment in new prisons is not matched by a credible plan to reduce our reckless overuse of prison in the first place."

Shadow justice secretary Richard Burgon said: "We need modern prisons fit for the modern age. But simply replacing one prison with another prison doesn't deal with the overcrowding crisis."

RIP: Frank 'Robin' Burfoot

Town mourns the loss of its town crier

TRIBUTES have been paid to Rochester town crier Frank 'Robin' Burfoot who has died. He was 81.

Known simply as Robin to many, he passed away on Wednesday morning of heart failure.

He was appointed to the post by Medway Council in 2004 and became a high profile figure in the town.

His bellowing voice, poetry and bell ringing could be heard every Saturday in Rochester High Street since he started up until his health began to deteriorate.

In his post he also attended festivals and events, charity functions, school fates, and participated annually at the Hasting Town Criers competition.

He will be buried in his town crier uniform. His tricorn hat and bell will be placed on the coffin at his funeral, details of which will be announced shortly.

The bell will then be taken to the Guildhall Museum for safe keeping.

Medway Council's portfolio holder for community service, Howard Doe, said: "This is very sad news for Medway and its residents. Many people will have known Robin for many years, and even those who didn't know him would have recognised his strong bellowing voice from events and festivals."

Water main works for Maidstone homes

WORK on the water mains in part of Maidstone could leave householders with reduced water pressure and tap water becoming discoloured, the firm behind the work has confirmed.

South East Water is cleaning out the water mains in the Shepway area - impacting on homes in the ME15 7 postcode sector - which should take around three days.

Work is due to start from next Wednesday, March 29, and forms part of the company's ongoing maintenance work on its underground mains. The process, known as flushing, involves directing water through the pipes quickly to draw sediment deposits – such as iron and manganese – out of the network.

South East Water's distribution manager, Michael Phillips, said: "During the flushing process customers may notice a reduction in water pressure, and possibly some discolouration, but this is temporary and can be solved by running the kitchen tap until the water runs clear."

Pocahontas parade marks anniversary

A SPECIAL parade took place through the streets of Gravesend on Tuesday to mark the 400th anniversary of the death of pioneering Native American, turned British socialite, Pocahontas.

It was part of a series of special events taking place this year to mark her death and burial in the Kent town. Other events include talks by local historians and lecturers, art workshops and, earlier this year, a visit from former US ambassador, Matthew Barzun.

The project has been funded by the Heritage Lottery, Arts Council England, and Celebrate England Funding.

Cabinet member for tourism and heritage, Jordan Meade said: "The Pocahontas 400 project was launched in June 2016 and has already gone some way to commemorating the unique story of Pocahontas' time in England from 1616 -1617 but we have more still to come. We really want to highlight the key events of the months leading up to Pocahontas' death and to retell Pocahontas' story for today's generation."

The parade ended at the Pocahontas statue.

Jail for leaving baby girl with fractures

A 25-year-old who assaulted a baby girl has been jailed for 10 years.

Victor Awadzi, of Sheerness, was arrested on May 14, 2014 after hospital staff became suspicious about the injuries of a baby girl who was less than six months old. She was found to have fractures but no underlying medical conditions that could account for the injuries.

At court Awadzi pleaded guilty to two counts of causing grievous bodily harm with intent, and a further charge of cruelty to a person under 16 years old.

He was sentenced to 10 years before bars, at Maidstone Crown Court, and must also spend a further five years on extended licence.

Investigating officer detective constable John Milham said: "The child's injuries were serious and it is fortunate she survived as the consequences for someone so young could have been tragic.

"Although he admitted guilt at court, Awadzi has never given a credible explanation has to how the injuries were caused."

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Major £1m investment into station planned for The Open

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

SIGNIFICANT improvements to Sandwich station are required if Kent is to reap economic benefits of some £100 million from hosting golf's The Open, according to Kent County Council.

Bosses announced last month the championship would return to the county for the 15th time in 2020, having last been held at Royal St George's back in 2011.

Last time it was in the county, The Open delivered a £77m benefit to the local economy, including some £24.14m of direct spending in Kent, and South Thanet MP Craig Mackinlay has suggested the deal could pump more than £100m into the county in three years' time.

A total of 180,091 fans flocked to Sandwich in 2011, and of these, some 134,000 spectators came from outside of the county, while images of Kent were broadcast to a worldwide audience of nearly 500 million homes.

Of those attending, 37,000 passengers travelled on the high speed train service from St Pancras, but Sandwich station struggled to cope with such volumes.

During peak periods, the level crossing was closed for some 40 minutes per hour, which had a knock-on effect, significantly delaying spectators accessing the venue by car, bus and on foot, and resulted in adverse publicity.

RETURN: The Open to return in 2020 but not before station is upgraded. Pic: Ady Kerry

To help ensure it is better equipped this time around, council chiefs are proposing an extension of platforms at the station to accommodate longer trains and construction of an additional footbridge linking platform passengers to a pathway leading to the club.

A feasibility study has been undertaken by Network Rail and bosses estimated the cost of delivering the improvements to be £1m.

KCC and four east Kent district councils have committed £350,000 to the project while the South East Local Enterprise Partnership has agreed in principle to provide another £300,000 using underspends from other schemes, though KCC will pick up the bill if that plan falls through.

In addition, organisers the Royal and Ancient Golf Club (R&A) will fund the purchase of land to enable the extended platform to join up with the new pathway to the club, and the positioning of a second bridge to join up with the new pathway.

Cash to fund libraries' digital playground

KENT County Council has received more than £104,000 in funding for libraries to create technological spaces for children living in disadvantaged areas.

Funding for the 'digital playground' was awarded by Arts Council England, after KCC pushed the initiative to help children get creative with technology, using activities such as robotic modelling, digital image making, and coding.

Units auction makes £415k for council

THANET District Council's disposal of property continued this week - realising £415,000 at auction for 22 business workshops at Dane Valley Enterprise Units in St Peter's, Broadstairs.

So far the council has raised £549,000 through sales of land and buildings this year, following an asset disposal strategy agreed last year.

Clocks go forward

IF this weekend seems a bit shorter than usual, that's because it is.

The clocks go forward an hour at 1am on Sunday for the start of British Summer time (BST).

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Anne of Cleves' 16th century panel is restored to her home

HEVER Castle has unveiled an 'extraordinarily rare' wooden panel, believed to have been made for former resident Anne of Cleves.

The oak panel which shows the insignia of Anne - the fourth wife of Henry VIII - alongside the monogram AC, is believed to have come from one of her homes, though it's not known which one. It is one of only two panels to exist, and dates back to 1544.

The panel was discovered by author Sarah Morris, who co-wrote the book In the Footsteps of the Six Wives of Henry VIII, and historian Dr Jonathan Foyle (both pictured).

They found the panel being auctioned in Bedfordshire, and notified the current owners of Hever Castle, the Guthrie family, who then purchased it.

Dr Foyle says Anne's tomb at Westminster Abbey replicates the design of the panel unveiled.

He said: "On very rare occasions, surviving relics appear that transform our understanding of how palaces were dressed for kings, queens and their audiences.

"It is an extraordinarily rare object and illuminates the real quality of Tudor interiors. It is one of a kind."

Football club applies for hotel on site of stadium

DEVELOPMENT of Ebbsfleet United's Stonebridge Road stadium has taken another step after the club submitted plans for a new stand and integrated hotel.

Initially the stand, at the Plough End, will accommodate 1,750 supporters on standing terraces with the ability to convert to seating when appropriate.

The club is working to achieve a planning consent from Gravesham Borough Council in May so work can start this coming June – with a projected completion date of April 2018.

It comes as work draws to a close on the Fleet's 5,000-seater main stand, which the club's owners have deemed necessary in order to generate greater revenue and avoid a repeat of the circumstances which brought about its near closure in 2013.

A club spokesperson said: "On a small site, the design has to be integrated to maximise use of the currently available area and we are now working on our plans for the Swanscombe End which will be communicated to supporters when they reach a finalised stage.

"Outline planning permission has been granted for all four sides of the stadium, but each phase requires submission of a detailed planning application, in this case with the amended design for the hotel, before the commencement of any works."

The 55-room hotel, on three levels, is designed with a lobby opening out on to a forecourt on Stonebridge Road.

Tumble dryer sparks fire

A TUMBLE dryer is being blamed for setting fire to a property in Gillingham on Wednesday night.

Fire crews were called to the two-storey property at Selstead Close and quickly doused the flames. No-one was reported injured.

Visit Kent's tourism push

VISIT Kent has launched a European tourism project to help empower small and medium businesses to be more innovative and pull in more visitors to the county.

The project, called Profit, aims to stimulate innovation and revenue growth in the tourism and leisure sectors.

Students visit No. 10

STUDENTS from Wilmington Grammar School met the prime minister this week after being invited to 10 Downing Street.

Head Donna Lodge said: ''It was a great privilege to discuss future proposals for education and to have the opportunity to see inside such an important residence.''

500 cannabis plants

A 49-YEAR-OLD man from Sheerness has been arrested after police uncovered around 500 cannabis plants in Queenborough.

Cultivation equipment was also discovered at the address in Railway Terrace on Thursday morning.

College merger proposals

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

A PUBLIC consultation has begun into the proposed merger of East Kent and Canterbury colleges.

The Broadstairs-based East Kent College, recently given a 'good' rating from Ofsted for its campuses in Thanet, Folkestone and Dover, has been overseeing Canterbury College since it ran into difficulties last year.

Graham Razey, principal of East Kent, was drafted in to act as interim principal at Canterbury and the two governing bodies have worked closely as it sought to make £3 million in savings in just three months.

That resulted in a number of job cuts, the scrapping of all A-level courses, and the sharing of some administrative services.

Then, in October, the two governing bodies separately agreed in principle to making the union permanent.

Following further investigation – including a full internal consultation into the proposed merger – the colleges are now beginning a statutory consultation into the proposal, which would include the dissolution of the current Canterbury College Corporation.

The new organisation which would be created as a result of the merger would be called the East Kent Colleges Group. The group would be made up of separate colleges in Broadstairs, Canterbury, Dover, Folkestone and Sheerness. Each of the colleges would retain a strong local identity and be designed to serve their local communities and industries.

Mr Razey said: "We believe this merger is the right thing to do in order to secure a vibrant further education offering for the people, employers and communities of east Kent. We've developed a robust plan to bring the colleges together as a group which will deliver real and tangible benefits to all of the communities and students we serve."

The merger process is being steered by a special transition board, comprised of governors from both colleges' governing bodies.

The consultation runs until April 17. Responses can be made via email to publicconsultation@eastkent.ac.uk or by writing to the clerk to the corporation, Sharon Hollingsworth, at Canterbury College, New Dover Road, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 3AJ. Or visit http://bit.ly/2n901Vg.

CHANGES: Your chance to have a say on future of Canterbury College

Beaches get lifeguard deal

SWALE Borough Council has clinched a new five-year deal with the RNLI to provide lifeguards along Sheppey's beaches.

The council's cabinet has agreed to the contract, with an option of a two year extension. The RNLI have been operating the service since 2012.

It will mean lifeguards patrolling Leysdown, Minster Leas and Sheerness beaches. The service operates from the first weekend in May until the beginning of September on weekends during term time, and for seven days a week during school holidays.

Actress stars with Blunt

A LOCAL actress has found herself in an advert for the new album by You're Beautiful star James Blunt.

Karol Steele, from Dover, is one of four speaking roles in the advert for the singer's new album, The Afterlove.

Says the actress: "James was was a very nice man, funny, self-effacing, and polite - he thanked us all for helping him with the advert, and even autographed my CDs."

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Vote scuppers plans for merged council but chiefs still hopeful

As four district authorities each held a crunch meeting this week, councillors in Shepway decided they didn't want to take plans for an east Kent council to consultation - so is it the end of the road?

By Tom Pyman
Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

CHIEFS leading ambitions of creating a merged east Kent council are remaining upbeat despite a vote in Shepway this week which ultimately brought about the plan's demise.

Members across the local authorities of Canterbury, Dover, Shepway and Thanet held crunch meetings on Wednesday over plans to come together and form one, large east Kent district council within the next two years.

By slashing senior posts and large salaries, the councils estimated they would save some £6.8m as they approach a crisis in funding over the coming years.

Approval from all four was needed to progress to public consultation, but while Dover and Thanet councillors gave the green light, members in Shepway voted against the plans, therefore bringing an end to the current business case produced by the authorities.

Canterbury's vote ended prematurely after councillors learned of the decision not to proceed in Shepway.

City council leader Simon Cook admitted he was disappointed having spoken enthusiastically about the plans in the past, but insisted he respected the decision of his colleagues in Folkestone and Hythe, and that an alternative would soon materialise.

"Life goes on, and now we want to reflect, have a think, and see what else we can do," he told KoS.

"We are still in the same situation we were earlier in the week in that the projections of cuts to funding are still the same, which is going to be financially challenging for us in the medium term.

"We have to come to terms with that and make sure we still provide the services residents want within those constraints - this idea was just one possibility. There's always an alternative, you just don't always know what it is.

"We are still all councils of east Kent, colleagues and friends but making knee-jerk decision now wouldn't be appropriate.

"Shepway is a democratic body that has made a decision and you can't argue with democracy."

Thanet District Council leader Chris Wells suggested moving forward as a trio might be difficult, having first explored the possibility of a merged council between five authorities.

Neither Cllr Wells or Cllr Cook commented on whether a business case would be produced for themselves and Dover, though it is understood alternative proposals are likely to be presented following the conclusion of the Kent County Council elections in May.

Ashford Borough Council announced earlier this year it was to not progress with the proposal but would work closely with the potential merger.

> **"Ukip as a party has never had a whip and if opposition members in other councils feel they have to represent their residents in that way, they can do so"**
>
> **Chris Wells,**
> Leader of Thanet District Council

Thanet North MP Sir Roger Gale told KoS he remained hopeful of the council materialising despite the vote.

"I wouldn't say it has fallen flat on it's face, it's just had a setback," he said. "Financially, Thanet is not terribly stable, so it's the right idea and I'm sorry it hasn't been taken forward at this stage.

"All the east Kent MPs, especially Charlie [Elphicke] and Craig [Mackinlay], have been very supportive, but Shepway has a right to say no.

"Now we need to look at what exactly has gone wrong and how we can put it right and put the show back on the road because I really believe it is the way forward for the area."

Opposing the move was a number of Ukip members, who made a joint statement last month, describing the proposals as creating "an EU for east Kent".

Ukip councillor Carol Sacre said: "I am sure our Shepway residents will join with me in conveying a grateful thank you to all in Shepway District Council who, led by Len Laws, the group leader of Ukip, and backed by the majority of Ukip councillors together with many Conservative councillors have said a resounding no to the merger of the four councils, thus averting a partnership whereby our local financial resources would be pooled and the 'poorer relations' sustained at a cost to others.

"We have been here before, haven't we, as one of the EU states, which as I understand, we as a country are still financing."

Their opposition adds an interesting dimension to the row given Cllr Wells, the leader credited with driving the proposals forward, also represents the same party.

Speaking after the meeting, he told KoS: "Ukip as a party has never had a whip and, in that context, if opposition members in other councils feel they have to represent residents in that way, they can do so."

He added: "After the important decision made by councillors in Shepway, we now need to take this opportunity to take stock and work hard to find a way forward together.

"We cannot shy away from the fact there are some big challenges facing the councils in east Kent and we need to think about new and innovative ways of tackling them.

"The levels of savings we each need to achieve have been widely documented, and that position remains the same.

"We now need to identify a suitable way forward to ensure we're in the best possible position for the future of east Kent.

"Once we have gone through that process, we will come forward with fresh proposals."

Shepway leader David Monk added: "Following a full discussion Shepway District Council has voted against moving forward with the proposal to create a new council for east Kent.

"Our decision means that none of the councils involved can proceed with the idea.

"We will need to take time to consider what implications that has for how we deliver services.

"Without any grant from central government significant savings will still be required.

"I have asked our officers to come forward with fresh proposals that will be put before council."

What do you think? Share you views and join the debate - email us at editorial@kosmedia.co.uk.

UNITY: Canterbury, Dover, Shepway and Thanet were set to merge but council chiefs now have to come up with an alternative plan

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PRESSURE: More than half the junior doctors at Kent & Canterbury Hospital are being moved due to a lack of permanent consultant doctors who oversee and support their training

Campaigners warn city hospital crisis is just the tip of the iceberg

With emergency care at Kent & Canterbury set to be severely affected, **Tom Pyman** gauges opinion

CAMPAIGNERS are warning plans to slash services at Kent & Canterbury Hospital could in turn see the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford "collapse" under increased pressure.

Health chiefs announced earlier this week more than half of the hospital's junior doctors will move to East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust's other two sites in Ashford and Margate, due to a lack of permanent consultant doctors who oversee and support their training.

Bosses admit up to 50 of the 900 people who attend the hospital each day will be affected over the next two to three months, with a quarter of people who attend its urgent care centre by ambulance each day would instead be taken to the emergency departments at William Harvey and the QEQM.

The trust insists the changes are only temporary, but Ken Rogers, of the Concern for Health in East Kent (CHEK) campaign group, told KoS he fears a knock-on effect will be felt throughout the county.

"I really can't believe how we got into this situation and how this proposal has any chance of working," he said.

"I fear we will also see the collapse of Ashford because of the extra pressure.

"This is afffecting 350 patients a week - that's a lot of people.

"Why can't they get more consultants in? We have got a lot of hospitals in the UK, so surely we could have two or three for six months to ease the pressure.

"It's clearly all about money."

EKHUFT has played down the fears, though, and insists the move is only temporary and will not be implemented immediately, to allow time for the trust to develop its plans and test them to make sure patients will be safe and well looked after.

Surgical services, chemotherapy services, renal, vascular and urology services, as well as all outpatient clinics, are not affected by the move, and the trust also points out that complex trauma cases and heart attack patients across Kent are already taken to the William Harvey in Ashford, so will see no change.

However, inpatient heart services, acute stroke services and some inpatient services for elderly patients with serious illness like pneumonia are all also likely to be affected by the move.

In a move to minimise disruption, patients living in or around Canterbury who are taken by ambulance to Ashford or Margate initially would be transferred to the K&C as soon as possible for their continued care until they are ready to leave hospital, the trust adds.

EKHUFT has commissioned an independent review of its plans to provide objective assurance that the proposed plans are robust and will address the implications for patient safety on all of the sites.

Bosses have written to all inpatients at the K&C to reassure them and their families that there will be no immediate changes to their care and insist further announcements will be made before any other changes are imposed.

> **"Why can't they get more consultants? We have a lot of hospitals in the UK, so surely we could have got two or three for six months to ease the pressure"**
>
> **Ken Rogers,**
> Concern for Health in East Kent

"I was very sorry to hear of this decision which will mean that emergency admissions will have to be in the first place to Ashford or Margate, although patients will still be able to be referred on to Canterbury," said city MP Sir Julian Brazier.

"My immediate focus is that we get a sustainable outcome from the current STP [sustainability and transformation plan] review which leaves open the long term goal of a full-size hospital in Canterbury, serving east Kent.

"This means prioritising the plans by our two main local universities for a medical school in east Kent to provide a draw for consultants and other key staff to work here."

Faversham and Mid Kent MP Helen Whately added: "I'm deeply disappointed to hear there's to be a reduction in the number of junior doctors at Kent & Canterbury Hospital as the trust has been unable to recruit enough consultants to oversee their training.

"Clearly it's not acceptable for junior doctors to be asked to train without appropriate supervision and I understand that means changes to some urgent care services at the hospital, with patients now being taken to Ashford or Margate instead.

"These are temporary changes, and I would be very concerned if they were to become permanent.

"The trust chief executive has assured me they will continue their efforts to recruit the consultants needed.

"It's now more important than ever that the plans for future healthcare in Kent include the option of a new major hospital in Canterbury and a medical school.

"We need an ambitious vision with gravitational pull to attracted talented medics, and make Kent a centre of excellence for healthcare."

Announcing the controversial decision earlier this week was the trust's chief executive, Matthew Kershaw, after recommendations by Health Education England (HEE), the body that oversees doctor training, which warned the move was necessary for patient safety.

"As a teaching trust, we are committed to providing high quality training and we will respond to any recommendations positively because we know that is best for both our junior doctors and for our patients," he said.

"Keeping patients safe and properly looked after is our top priority.

"We know the hospital is safe now, but we are making careful plans for what we now have to do in the best interest of patients.

"Staff have worked extremely hard over the last two years to improve how we care for patients, as recognised by the Care Quality Commission and recent decision to remove the trust from quality special measures.

"We are taking temporary steps so that we can continue to provide safe, high quality care for our patients and improve the quality of our medical training.

"Over the next two to three months we will need to temporarily combine a limited number of services at the Kent & Canterbury with those at our hospitals at Ashford and Margate while we work on a sustainable solution.

"We are committed to making sure as many patients as possible can still be cared for in Canterbury.

"We would like to reassure all patients who are expecting to come into hospital shortly that their appointment or procedure will take place as usual."

What do you think? Is this the beginning of the end for the Kent & Canterbury Hospital? Email us with your experiences and views to editorial@kosmedia.co.uk or write to: The Editor, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford, TN23 1PP.

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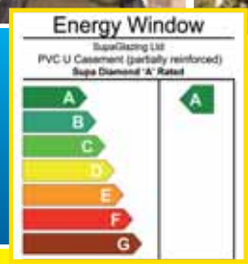

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Westminster must remain open, say MPs

The county's representatives respond to calls for more security at the palace, and relive their own experiences, after being locked inside the House of Commons for more than five hours. We take a look at how Kent responded to the week's events

By Tom Pyman & Chris Murphy
Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

KENT MPs caught up in Wednesday's terror attack in Westminster have rejected calls for increased security and reduced public access to the Houses of Parliament, insisting it would be an affront to democracy.

The county's representatives were locked in the Commons chamber and their own personal offices for five hours after a man mowed down pedestrians with his car on Westminster Bridge, then stabbed PC Keith Palmer outside the gates in front of the house, before being shot by armed police.

Three bystanders were also killed in the attack, which sent shockwaves around the globe, and led to some calls for tighter security at the Palace of Westminster.

However, parliamentarians from across Kent and Medway are determined to ensure it is business as usual, and that the house should remain open to the public every day, with visitors on Wednesday including students from Rainham Mark Grammar School - all of whom had left the area before the incident took place.

Thanet North MP Sir Roger Gale was one of approximately 300 locked inside the chamber, with access to water and toilets but little else.

Reflecting on a dramatic afternoon, he told KoS: "I actually heard four bangs but I didn't know at the time they were the gunshots.

"A bomb is unmistakable, but there's a lot of noise outside my office, and I thought this could have been a car backfiring.

"But I did manage to see the SWAT teams and it was stunning the way they blitzed through all the Portacabins.

"A very brave man lost his life on our behalf but the potential attack didn't get past the first base, which is what is supposed to happen.

"They did what they had to do and we are all extremely grateful for it.

As one of the longest-serving MPs in the country, having been first elected back in 1983, Sir Roger said he has not witnessed anything comparable in the 34 years he has served.

The only incident remotely similar, he said,

ATTACK HALTS CROSSING ANNOUNCEMENT

A Lower Thames Crossing announcement was due to be made this week, but government chiefs slammed the brakes on the plans in light of Wednesday's terror attack.

A number of senior sources in both Dartford and Gravesham confirmed to KoS they were expecting a decision earlier in the week, with one claiming transport secretary Chris Grayling was due to make his announcement at some point on Thursday.

There were even rumours that Mr Grayling was due to visit Kent himself, but a decision was quickly made to scrap the appearance following events the previous day, sources claim.

The Department of Transport have not commented despite frequent attempts to confirm the facts by KoS.

Consequently, an announcement may not be made until the conclusion of Kent County Council's elections in May, due to purdah rules, which have now come into effect.

This is a period of time before an election that prevents central and local government from making announcements about new or controversial initiatives which could sway voters.

Both boroughs have been waiting to find out whether a new crossing will be built in the Gravesham countryside or at the existing crossing in Dartford, since the end of a consultation last year, which was the largest ever for a UK road project with more than 47,000 responses.

Highways England ran the consultation and used the opportunity to voice its support for Option C - a bored tunnel east of Gravesend.

Since then, the government has remained tight-lipped on its preference, with Theresa May and the Department for Transport saying a decision will be made "in due course" following repeated public lobbying from MPs such as Gareth Johnson, Rehman Chishti and Charlie Elphicke.

As both boroughs wait with baited breath, there is widespread belief in both areas that the government will give its backing to Option C.

DRAMA: The scene outside the Houses of Parliament on Wednesday afternoon as paramedics treat the attacker (knives he is believed to have carried circled) and PC Palmer. All photos: PA Wire.

was when then-prime minister Tony Blair was hit by a flour-filled condom thrown by a protester from Fathers 4 Justice in 2004 - "a pretty good shot" as the MP recalled.

"Security is as good as it can be if you are going to have a democratic parliament," he added.

"Some 3,000 people work here and it's one big family, and PC Palmer is part of that family and a great loss to us all.

"I know all the officers on the gate because every evening I drive out, wind down the window and say 'good night' and so do they.

"People ask 'how do you protect them'? Unfortunately, you can't protect against a lone wolf who is determined to do damage.

"President Kennedy was shot - if you're going to be open to the public you can't guarantee 100 per cent safety all the time.

"There'll be a review to make sure there are no holes but I doubt they will come up with anything and I don't want them to. I don't want to work in an armoured car.

"You don't go into these things with your eyes shut, but you can't go into the building thinking this is dangerous because of course you

■ **Continued on page 16**

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Terror in Westminster

■ Continued from page 15

might get knocked down by a number 11 bus crossing the road.

"You'd go mad if you spent all your time worrying."

Joining him in the Commons at the time was Tracey Crouch - sports minister and MP for Chatham and Aylesford.

"The mood was calm. We are prepared for events like this," she said.

"We had access to lavatories and water and shared phone chargers to make sure everyone was able to contact loved ones.

"The security around Westminster is first class. The attacker was less than 10 yards beyond the gates, so I would not want to see it fortified."

Ashford MP Damian Green, who is also the government's work and pensions secretary, saw Theresa May being rushed to safety before taking refuge in his own office.

"I was in a cabinet committee meeting and the prime minister was taken away by her security guard," he said.

"The rest of us were told to return to our offices, which is where I was for several hours.

"There was no panic but everyone moved very quickly. The police were incredibly efficient and professional."

Sittingbourne and Sheppey MP Gordon Henderson echoed the sentiment that parliament should remain as open as possible.

"I was just coming out of the voting lobby when it happened," he told us.

"I went back to my office not knowing what was going on outside, and then saw it on television.

"I stayed in my office until the police took us to a waiting room where we were kept safe.

"The mood was sombre, it was calm and later there was a sense of sadness for those that lost their life, including the police officer.

"The way in which the parliamentary security and police worked with the special forces, including the counter-terror officers was like clockwork.

"As for extra fortifications, I would be against it. It is currently as tight as it can be while allowing members of the public to visit their home of democracy.

"All the time we allow visitors in, it can only be as watertight as that allows, and I wouldn't want to change that."

Faversham and Mid Kent MP Helen Whately added: "The attacker may have wished to undermine our society and way of life, but instead we are filled with more determination than ever to uphold our values and resist the evil of organisations like Daesh [the so-called Islamic State] and their affiliates.

"This attack will have the exact opposite effect of what we imagine he intended.

"Thanks to PC Palmer and his colleagues in the police and security services, my staff and I are carrying on our work on behalf of constituents, undeterred."

TRAGIC: Police officers pay their respects to PC Keith Palmer, as Thanet North MP Sir Roger Gale, right, reveals what he saw

POLICE STEPPED UP ON OUR STREETS AFTER ATTACK

Armed police officers lined the streets of Kent this week in response to the terror attack on Wednesday.

The force's chief constable Alan Pughsley said there was no specific threat to the county but insisted he and his team were taking extra care by placing more officers across Kent.

"Public safety remains our top priority and there will be additional patrols, both armed and unarmed, across the county to ensure Kent remains a safe place to live, work and visit," he said.

"There is nothing to suggest there is a specific threat to Kent and at this time our thoughts are with our Metropolitan Police Service colleagues and all those tragically affected by the event in London.

"I would like to ask the public to remain vigilant and let us know if they see anything suspicious that causes them concern by dialling 999 immediately."

Following the attack, the UK's terrorism threat level remained at 'severe' and Kent Police released advice to the public about what to do in the event of an attack.

A statement said: "The threat level from international terrorism in the UK is severe, meaning an attack is highly likely.

"The national advice is simple; if you're caught up in an incident; run if you can; hide if you can't; tell us by calling the police and warn others to stay away."

Flags were at half mast on Thursday outside police and council offices across the county as authorities paid their respects to the victims of Wednesday's deadly attack.

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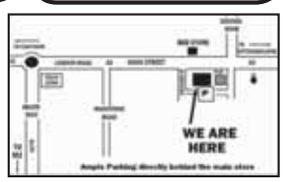

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Killer's road to terror at Westminster

From school in Tunbridge Wells to life radicalised and violent. We look back at the emerging background of a terrorist

END: Khalid Masood was born Adrian Ajao and grew up in Tunbridge Wells

KHALID Masood wrote himself a dark chapter in Britain's history on Wednesday and this weekend police continue to discover how the boy born in Kent turned into a man twisted by fanatical hatred of the West.

Born to a single mother, Janet Elms, on Christmas Day in 1964 in Dartford, he entered the world known as Adrian Russell Ajao - but took his mother's maiden name shortly after.

He moved to St James' Park in Tunbridge Wells where he attended the now-shut Huntleys school.

His mother married and he lived with two half brothers before moving to Rye, just over the Kent/East Sussex border.

Stuart Knight, 52, of Southborough Butchers in Tunbridge Wells, was in the same class as Masood at Huntleys for five years before they left in 1981.

"He was a smashing lad, but I wouldn't say we were close friends," he told KoS.

"We didn't spend time outside of school and when I left aged 16 I didn't see or hear from him again until this week.

"But he was a very nice guy, down-to-earth, liked by everyone around him.

"There was nothing unassuming about him, he was a very good sportsman, his mother was a Christian, he was an all-round nice guy.

"He was one of only two black people out of 600 children; in those days there weren't many black people in the area.

"I don't know if he had girlfriends but he did party very well, he liked to have a good time.

"I'm surprised he turned and did what he did."

Masood's life was never far from trouble.

His criminal career dated back to 1983 and included convictions for assault, GBH and possession of an offensive weapon.

This led him to spend time behind bars at Lewes Prison in East Sussex, Wayland Prison in Norfolk and Ford open prison in West Sussex.

But he would later mask his life of crime with a CV which claimed he was an experienced English teacher who had worked across the world.

The document, seen by The Sun, lists Masood as a university-educated English teacher with experience working in places such as Saudi Arabia and Luton. It is understood he never worked as a teacher in any of England's state schools.

At some point - and just when is far from clear - he underwent a religious conversion, ditching his birth name and instead adopting Khalid Choudry. It is believed he would go on to use a host of other aliases.

When he died on the cobbles outside parliament, he reportedly left behind three children and a wife.

The killer most recently appeared to be based in the West Midlands, but also spent time in London, Sussex and Luton.

After his armed onslaught on Wednesday, police searched a three-storey townhouse in the Winson Green area of Birmingham and neighbours said Masood lived there for around seven months until December last year.

Kent MP Gareth Johnson insisted he wanted to put distance between the killer and his constituency.

"He may have been born in Dartford but he is not a true Dartfordian; he turned his back on us and our values and embraced evil itself," he said.

"Dartford people are far stronger than the evil he, and others like him, peddle. He is neither a Dartfordian nor a Muslim."

Masood had registered on the radar of the security services in years gone by, but was not believed to be actively planning any attack.

Prime minister Theresa May told the Commons: "It is still believed that this attacker acted alone, and the police have no reason to believe there are imminent further attacks on the public.

"What I can confirm is that some years ago - he was once investigated in relation to concerns about violent extremism. He was a peripheral figure.

"The case is historic - he was not part of the current intelligence picture.

"There was no prior intelligence of his intent - or of the plot. Intensive investigations continue.

"Our working assumption is that the attacker was inspired by Islamist ideology."

After identifying him publicly on Thursday, on Friday the Met Police issued an appeal to the public for help in building up a full picture of the terrorist.

Deputy acting commissioner Mark Rowley said: "We remain keen to hear from anyone who knew Khalid Masood well; understands who his associates were; and can provide us with information about places he has recently visited.

"There might well be people out there who did have concerns about Masood but weren't sure or didn't feel comfortable for whatever reason in passing information to us.

"I urge anyone with such information to contact us the Anti-Terrorist hotline which is 0800 789 321."

Tributes keep coming for fallen policeman

TRIBUTES have been paid this week to PC Keith Palmer - the police officer stabbed to death as he challenged terrorist Khalid Masood as he attempted to storm the Palace of Westminster.

Despite desperate efforts to save his life, he died at the scene.

The 48-year-old had joined the Met Police in 2001 and served in Bromley for seven years, from 2002 to 2009.

He joined the parliamentary and diplomatic protection command in April 2016 and before that was in the territorial support group based at Catford but working across London.

He was married and had a five-year-old daughter.

In a statement his family said: "Keith will be remembered as a wonderful dad and husband. A loving son, brother and uncle. A long-time supporter of Charlton FC.

"Dedicated to his job and proud to be a police officer, he was brave and courageous; a friend to everyone who knew him.

"He will be deeply missed. We love him so much.

"His friends and family are shocked and devastated by his loss."

PC James Aitkenhead, who worked alongside Keith in the TSG, praised his former colleague as a "genuinely nice person" for whom "nobody had a bad word to say".

"When I heard what had happened I knew it would be him because that's just the sort of guy he was, to step straight in when others might step back."

He said PC Palmer had a "great work ethic" and "was always so positive, always staying late after everyone else and getting in early".

PC Aitkenhead added: "We will miss him so much."

Inspector Mark Turner, from the parliamentary and diplomatic protection command, who most recently worked with PC Palmer, said: "He really was a solid reliable member of the team - he came in and just got the job done, quietly and efficiently.

"He was a fantastic member of staff and will be sorely missed."

The Metropolitan Police said that PC Palmer's shoulder number - 4157U - would be retired and not reissued to any other officer.

Earlier, his former colleague, Conservative MP James Cleverly, paid a tearful tribute to the man he met 25 years ago as part of Battery 100 Regiment, Royal Artillery.

He said: "He was a strong, professional public servant and it was a delight to meet him again only a few months after being elected."

PC Palmer served as a reservist from August 1987 to August 2001, leaving as a bombardier.

Scotland Yard's leading anti-terror officer Mark Rowley said: "He was someone who left for work on Wednesday expecting to return home at the end of his shift - and he had every right to expect that would happen."

Mr Cleverly called on his friend to be given posthumous recognition for his actions.

HERO: PC Palmer spent seven years serving as an officer in Bromley

Prime minister Theresa May responded: "Having served in our armed forces and then come here to this place and paid the ultimate sacrifice here at the heart of our democracy, I can assure (Mr Cleverly) that the issue that he's raised is of course one that will be considered in due course.

Meet the pod homes which could solve housing crisis

Walderslade has just taken delivery of a host of easy-to-erect properties which it hopes could prove to be a vital weapon in the bid to ease the demand for homes

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

THE need for more homes will not be news to anyone - but the squeeze on the economy has slowed their creation just at the point we are reaching a crisis point.

But now Medway Council believes it has found the ideal solution - pod homes.

Unlike the post-war prefabs, which were not designed to last, these new to construct homes have a guarantee of more than half a century.

They essentially arrive at building sites pretty much already completed, are placed on their plot and the roof installed.

And that's it.

The authority says it is all part of their bid to speed up the building of new houses to meet growing demand and supports ambitions in a government white paper to create kit house communities.

So in January 2015 it started looking at the options.

It gave planning permission to Ene Group, and now it has started to become a reality.

Fifteen of them are being built in Peacock Rise in Walderslade, Chatham. The first three have already arrived on the back of lorries from their manufacturing base in Scotland.

The council said they arrive on the bulding site already 85 per cent complete with the only major addition needed being the roof.

Once finished, the development will comprise 15 homes, with sale prices starting from £185,000 for a one-bed apartment, to £330,000 for a three-bed semi detached house with a garage.

The company behind the project says using this steel frame method of house construction is 40 per cent quicker than utilising traditional methods. The external walls are brick slip and cladding.

That means just four weeks between pod arrival on a site to the new owner turning the key in the front door.

Plus, they come with a 60-year warranty when bought through estate agency Reeds Rains.

Two of the larger homes at Peacock Rise will be ready for new owners to move into by mid-April. The remaining pods will be sold off-plan, said the council, which confirmed ownership remains with the builder until purchased.

Diane Chambers, chairman of Medway Council's planning committee, said: "The committee was very impressed by the application from Ene Group.

"These are the first homes of this kind to arrive in Medway and it marks a new, more efficient era for house building. I look forward to seeing the homes completed, which thanks to their design shouldn't be too long at all."

Gary Mayatt, the Dartford based managing director of Ene Group, said: "Off-site construction has been a passion of mine for quite some time now, and I am keen to showcase what we manufacture in Scotland with a view to bringing a factory down to Kent in the long term.

"Peacock Rise is a personal project of mine and I've put my money where my mouth is to prove how good the concept is by showcasing our work."

Modular 'kit' buildings like these have a long history.

The Prefab Museum is an online archive dedicated to the post-war buildings used to ease the crisis of the 1940s.

It said: "The prefabs were located on bomb sites and open spaces including parks, in rural locations, towns and villages, and were scheduled to last 10 to 15 years. They did much longer as hundreds of them are still standing, lived-in and cherished many decades later."

"The 'prefab' which was made of prefabricated parts and could be put together and erected by semi and unskilled workers. Prefabs boasted fitted kitchens and wardrobes, indoor toilet and bathroom with heated towel rail, constant hot water, a vented heating system – and a fridge."

Medway's modern alternative offers all that and more.

The government white paper, which looked at housing issues between 2015 and 2020 concluded:

"After a long period under the radar, the shortage of housing supply has been thrown into the spotlight thanks to the combination of a recent price boom and stagnant real

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TOWNS CONTINUE THEIR REGENERATION

MEDWAY has recently come in for some high praise for its regeneration efforts.

Stephen Wilkinson, president of the Royal Town Planning Institute visited regeneration sites across Medway earlier this month.

He said: "I have seen some great examples of how the planning team is working to deliver the exciting vision for the area. There is a focus on delivering sustainable development across the authority with regeneration projects delivered along the River Medway."

Among the site he saw was Rochester Riverside, Royal Dockyard and Chatham Maritime.

And in February, housing minister Gavin Barwell opened Centenary Gardens, Gillingham, which is one of the largest council-built energy efficient bungalow sites in the UK.

It is part of an £8.5million housing development programme and comprises 32 one- and two-bed bungalows for social rent. They were created with older tenants and people with mobility problems in mind and are suitable for those looking to downsize, as well as people who struggle in their current living accommodation. Some of the properties are fully accessible for wheelchair users.

wages.

"Though it may only recently have captured widespread political attention, it has been clear for some time that housing supply is not keeping up with the additional demand generated by rising life expectancy, immigration and the growing number of one-person households.

"Estimates put the need for additional housing in England at between 232,000 to 300,000 new units per year, a level not reached since the late 1970s and two to three times current supply.

"House price inflation in areas of high demand has led commentators to suggest that by 2020 home ownership will be an 'impossible dream' for those not already on the ladder.

"Declining affordability would suggest that, for many, that dream is already impossible."

Medway is determined to prove that vision wrong.

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Ramsgate gets 'action zone' status and share of £6m pot

Seaside town's continued regeneration gets a boost after Historic England names it as one of 10 areas in the country to benefit from significant invesment

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

RAMSGATE is to share a £6 million cash pot after being named one of 10 'action zones' by heritage charity Historic England.

It is expected the cash will be used to repair and reopen some of the Georgian and Victorian buildings in and around its royal harbour over the next three to five years.

Ramsgate has long been perceived as the unexploited gem of Thanet - so often over-looked compared to neighbouring Margate, where such focus and investment has been ploughed into the former resort in a bid for it to try and recapture some past glories, and Broadstairs, which remains a perennial tourist destination.

But Ramsgate's splendour, with a coastline stretching around its magnificent marina, has long drawn admiring glances and there has been considerable investment as people start moving to the town to both live and work.

Historic England said it is intending for the action zones to use the money to attract new investment, bringing with it economic and social benefits for the local community.

The scheme will run in partnership with Thanet District Council, Ramsgate Coastal Community Team, Ramsgate Town Council and The Ramsgate Society and each are being invited to submit joint suggestions on where the windfall cash can best be spent.

Historic England said it is providing an estimated £400,000 to the project over five years, to be matched by £10,000 a year from Ramsgate Town Council and considerable staff time and resources from Thanet Council. Historic England adds a skilled project officer will be funded to coordinate a programme of activities and promote opportunities for locals to also become deeply involved.

The organisation said: "The Heritage Action Zone team will engage the local community to increase public understanding of the rich local heritage that exists in Ramsgate, including the exciting maritime story.

"There will be lots of opportunities for local people and groups to get involved with initial plans set to involve schools, give opportunity for training in heritage related skills and public exhibitions and programmes where the public can put forward their ideas for the town."

Historic England said it plans to work in close partnership with local organisations to fully understand what makes the heritage in Ramsgate special enough to protect and promote with improvements. To that end, Historic England will also assist Thanet District Council to carry out urgent work to preserve vacant or partially occupied listed buildings in the town.

Andy Brown, planning director for Historic England in the South East said: "Ramsgate is one of the great English coastal towns with a fascinating maritime history. As well as Britain's only Royal Harbour, the town is blessed with a wonderful variety of historic sites including buildings by the architect Augustus Pugin, who is famous for designing the interiors of the Palace of Westminster, including his own house and the neighbouring church. But this barely scratches the surface of what Ramsgate has to offer as a historic town. The Heritage Action Zone partnership brings together the national skills and local passion which will make use of its amazing heritage stories and places to reinvigorate Ramsgate, helping to grow the local economy, boosting tourism and business investment as well as encouraging the local community to reconnect with its heritage with a renewed sense of pride."

The council's deputy leader and cabinet member for community services is Lin Fairbrass.

She said: "The town combines outstanding heritage and architecture with a beautiful marine landscape and engaging history. Being chosen as one of the country's first 10 Heritage Action Zones will not only raise awareness of our town as a heritage destination to attract visitors and investors, but will also reinforce our sense of identity and pride.

"The partnership will act as a catalyst for regeneration and we look forward to Ramsgate being better understood, enjoyed, valued and protected."

Ramsgate Town Council said: "We are fully supportive of the Ramsgate Heritage Action Zone and are pleased to be able to support the initiative both morally and financially."

Certainly the town has suffered some blows in recent years. The loss of regular cross-Channel services via its port has brought into question its very future. South Thanet MP Craig Mackinlay recently suggested the port should be transformed into a leisure-focused facility. It is not, however, a view shared by Thanet District

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BOOM: Famous marina, above, and town's skyline, left

Council which has recently invested millions of pounds in upgrading the facilities and dredging the harbour in order for it to be fit to accomodate vessels.

In addition, there has been the long-running saga of the Pleasurama site on the seafront. Dogged by delays since 2004, when plans were first revealed to build a hotel along with apartments, shops and leisure facilities, the site has passed through several owners and remains boarded up - much to the chagrin of locals and politicians.

However, it is hoped this new influx of cash will go someway towards Ramsgate focusing on the positives and continuing to develop despite some of the setbacks it has received.

John Walker from the Ramsgate Civic Society explained: "This recognises the importance of Ramsgate's heritage and the role that it can play in regeneration and economic growth.

"We want to develop a number of projects that over the next five years will engage local people in improving their knowledge of the value of our heritage which makes Ramsgate such a special place to visit and live."

Ramsgate joins Appleby in Cumbria, Coventry in the West Midlands, Elsecar in South Yorkshire, Hull in East Yorkshire, King's Lynn in North Norfolk, Nottingham in the East Midlands, Sunderland in Tyne and Wear, Sutton in south London and Weston-super-Mare in Somerset.

■ **The people of Ramsgate are now encouraged to give their views on the Ramsgate Heritage Action Zone by visiting http://bit.ly/2nvA82X.**

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Dame Vera's 100th is celebrated

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

WET and windy weather failed to dampen the enthusiasm as Kent paid a special tribute to Dame Vera Lynn on her 100th birthday on Monday.

Although a planned fly-past of Spitfire fighter jets over the White Cliffs of Dover had to be shelved for 24 hours due to the conditions, and a number of large bluebird models had to be laid flat rather than stood up as intended due to the wind, a special salute was still given to the Forces' Sweetheart.

Dame Vera immortalised the white cliffs in one of her most famous wartime songs in which she sang of bluebirds over the White Cliffs of Dover.

On Monday, a 350ft image of the singer was beamed onto the cliffs before a special gathering at South Foreland lighthouse at St Margaret's Bay.

War veterans, Second World War re-enactors, 1940s' singers and supporters of the Dame Vera Lynn's Children's Charity gathered by a special display with the Union Jack flag proudly flying at full-mast.

Dame Vera, who spent her day celebrating with a family party at her home in Ditchling, East Sussex, said: "I can't believe everyone went to so much trouble to wish me a happy birthday – I feel incredibly humbled by it all."

The spectacle came just days after the release of her latest album, which entered the top 10, and a star-studded birthday event at the London Palladium.

Virginia Portman, general manager at the White Cliffs of Dover for the National Trust, said: "The White Cliffs will be forever intertwined with the British wartime spirit immortalised in Dame Vera's songs. Her music marked the start of the enduring emotional connection that people feel when they visit us here. Today, the cliffs we care for are home to a rich array of wildlife, from rare butterflies to falcons. We use traditional conservation methods, including our herd of Exmoor ponies, to preserve the delicate chalk grassland for generations to come. We're delighted to be a part of Dame Vera's extra special day."

Dame Vera took a trip down memory lane on her 100th birthday as pupils from her old primary school sang Happy Birthday and serenaded her with her most beloved songs.

A specially arranged choir of 20 Year Five students at Brampton Primary School in Newham, east London, performed four songs on Skype for the Forces' Sweetheart including her much loved wartime hits We'll Meet Again and The White Cliffs of Dover, backed by an acoustic guitar.

Wearing a seasonal floral cardigan and speaking via Skype from her home, she thanked the starstruck students and recalled her "very good memories" at the school.

The centenarian, who was born in East Ham in east London and who would have attended the school in the mid to late 1920s, told the students: "I have very happy memories of my days at Brampton Park school and I do hope that you're happy there now."

Last Friday saw the launch of her new album, Vera Lynn 100, which features re-orchestrated versions of her most beloved music alongside her original vocals, making her the first centenarian to release an album.

SALUTE: Wind and rain failed to dampen the mood for Dame Vera, right

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HYBRID: 80s and 90s bands plan to play mix of songs from old and new albums, so audience get to hear favourite hits

Dartford Festival's line-up will have fans Hooked this year

Peter Hook, and The Christians are among final headliners announced...

DARTFORD FESTIVAL have announced the acts for this summer's line-up saying it has the making of a 'classic year'.

Finishing the headline acts alongside Bromley's X Factor winner Matt Terry, and 90s legends Space, are Peter Hook and The Light, The Christians, Ian Prowse and Amsterdam, and Shane Hampsheir.

Rock band Peter Hook and The Light were formed by former Joy Division and New Order bassist, Peter Hook. The band are set to play a festival 'hybrid' of songs from both bands.

80s pop group The Christians will be back on the scene playing hits such as Ideal World, Born Again, and songs from their number one album Colour.

Lead singer of The Christians, Garry Christian, said: "The band and I are really buzzing to be playing Dartford Festival especially on our 30th anniversary year... We want to show everyone that despite not getting to Kent often enough that Dartford is certainly not a forgotten town - can't wait to get everyone in full festival happy mood on July 15 when we'll be singing all the hits you remember."

25 years after his first album was released, Ian Prowse and Amsterdam will also be taking to the Dartford stage.

And following his recent headlining show in New York, and an iTunes Jazz Chart No. 1 single, Shane Hampsheir will bringing hits from the world of swing, including classic songs from the likes of Frank Sinatra, Chet Baker and Tony Bennett.

Dartford council leader Jeremy Kite said: "It's always a sign that summer is not far away when we announce the artists to appear at Dartford Festival.

"I'm delighted with the reputation the festival now has as a major event for the fans of great live music.

"The line-up for this year's festival is really coming together and it has the makings of a classic year. Peter Hook and The Christians will be names familiar to serious music lovers and it's wonderful that they are going to be on the festival stage here at Dartford."

Local lad Matt Terry was announced as the first headline act for this year's festival.

On the back of his X Factor win, the singer rose to number three at the charts with his debut single When Christmas Comes Around written by Ed Sheeran.

Space plan to bring together their former albums and new album when they headline, and have promised hits such as Female of the Species and Neighbourhood.

Other previously announced artists, over the July 15/16 weekend, include the Skatonics, who have played alongside Madness, The Beat, The Selecter and Dartford Festival favourites, Bruce Foxton's "From the Jam" & Neville Staple. This eight-piece band is rapidly becoming one of the best SKA bands in the UK.

Tribute to the legendary band fronted by Freddie Mercury, Queen II, will also be performing favouties such as We Will Rock You, We Are The Champions, Bohemian Rhapsody, and Somebody To Love.

For updates on this free festival follow @welovedartford on Twitter.

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ATTRACTIVE genuine lady, n/s, homely, GSOH, likes countryside walks, travelling, holidays, seaside, WLTM kind, easygoing man, n/s, 50-67, for friendship and possible relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426545**

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3002 Box 419673**

ANITA widow, young at heart, seeks male 60 to 70 for fun. I love dancing and pub lunches. Genuine responses. **Text only. Mailbox: 5673022**

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. **Tel: No: 0906 515 3010 Box: 409715**

CARING, cuddly lady, 70, looks younger, seeks honest romantic gent to bring happiness to her life. TLC and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426263**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel: 0906 515 3018 Box: 413399**

WIDOW, 70s, loves dancing, wining and dining, pub lunches, theatre, cinema, walks on the beach, the sun, WLTM a soul mate who has plenty of TLC to give. Is anyone out there? **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426189**

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3022 Box 421375**

MATURE lady 70s, various interests but a bit lonely, hoping to meet a gent to cheer me up, come on, we can have some fun together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426349**

TAMIKA, mature black beauty, hourglass figure and open minded. Pls call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice. I can travel and accommodate. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3006 Box 422365**

GENTS, please call me if you are looking to meet a kind sincere lady for nights at the theatre, socialising etc. You can call or text me. I promise to reply, I'm very genuine. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426345**

SAMANTHA, 35yrs, attractive brunette with own business, seeks adventurous gent for casual relationship. **Tel: 0906 515 3034 Box 425979**

JACKIE is 54yrs and an attractive easygoing brunette, she's hoping to meet a similar minded chap for some fun, dates, chats, text or call me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426343**

JASMINE, 34yrs, non smoking first time dater! Easy going, attractive and hard working. Due to work commitments I'm looking for a no strings companion any age. Looks unimportant must have GSOH. **Tel: 0906 515 3014 Box 426201**

ATTRACTIVE blonde lady, 54yrs, loyal, romantic and solvent hoping to meet a gent with GSOH for romance, sensual times and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426341**

HARRIETT 42yrs, blue eyed brunette with long lets and decent curves! Looking for a cheeky adventurous man for fun only. I live alone so can accommodate and can travel. Discretion assured. ACA. Give me a try. **Tel: 0906 515 3030 Box 426205**

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KAREN, 52yrs, attractive with GSOH, very active and outgoing. If you are 40+ give me a call, lets have a chat, maybe meet up. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426339**

CORRINE, genuine advertiser seeking adult fun, no time wasters pls. I will respond to all msgs. **Text Only. Mailbox: 4035196**

CAROLINE, attractive mature lady, various interests, hoping to meet a smart gent for socialising, perhaps leading to something more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426347**

PHILIPPA, feminine open minded lady seeking adult fun, genuine responses only pls, no time-wasters. **Text Only: Mailbox: 4030610**

I'M a widow in my 70s, WLTM a gent, 65-75, with a GSOH, I love dancing, the sun, eating out, keep fit. Must be someone in the Woking, Weybridge, Guildford area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424851**

OCTAVIA, black seductress, 53yrs, waiting to meet you. Pls text me today. **Text Only. Mailbox: 4090520**

PETITE black female, 51, slim build, into music, meals out and in, pubs, travelling, looking for a fit, white male, maybe Irish or Italian, for relationship and shared interests. Looks unimportant but sense of humour a must. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425949**

SLIM, tall, elegant, feminine, n/s, solvent lady, late 50s, likes travel and red wine, WLTM a tall, sincere, professional or retired gentleman. Genuine replies only please. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425883**

ANETTA, black cuddly lady seeks man who knows what a woman needs. I'm very friendly and have time for you. Please call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425933**

JANE, attractive and young looking 60 something lady, active, outgoing with interesting personality, hoping to meet a kind gent for occasional meetings. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425931**

GILLY, slim petite lady, affectionate and loving, solvent with own home, hoping to meet gent, must be kind, looks unimportant. ACA/text answered. **Tel No; 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425929**

MERRY widow seeks lovely lonely gent for companionship. Please call, we can have a chat and see how we get on. **Tel No; 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425927**

ZARA 45, teenage son, seeking genuine male, 28-50, N/S for friendship, maybe more. Single dad welcome. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 404885**

PEGGY, 65, short hair, medium build, GSOH, n/s, don't drink, likes music, animals and travelling, looking for long lasting friendship with a gentleman, 60-68. Please no timewasters. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425425**

LOUISE 46, busty, 5ft 3ins, long hair, fun, likes to chat, likes meals out, drinks, seeking N/S male, 28-49 for dating. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414131**

MATURE slim, feminine widow, loves concerts, art galleries, long walks, travelling. Seeks sincere gent for friendship/relationship. **Text only. Mailbox: 5702952**

EILEEN mid 60s seeks gent 50s-60s for friendship, possibly much more. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425341**

WANTED gent 50-76 for cosy nights in, good times, call or text me, you won't be sorry. I'm attractive and have lots to offer. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425339**

LINDA, 48yrs attractive brunette seeks gent for laughter, wining dining. Age unimportant. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425337**

SUE, attractive genuine lady, own home, loves to spoil a man, give me a call or text. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424673**

SOLVENT gentleman, young 70s, loves life seeking a lady of any age to spoil and pamper, take on holidays, wine and dine. Genuine advertiser. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425935**

MIDDLE aged man, Italian good looks, seeks attractive female. Get in touch I would be very pleased to meet you! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425771**

DAVID 60s, slim, submissive, seeking plus size mature dominating lady to show me the error of my ways. Discretion assured. **Text only. Mailbox: 4370067**

SILVER fox, presentable, 5ft11, medium build, n/s, GSOH, seeks lady to share fun, TLC, mutual pleasures, for discreet no strings relationship. Daytime/evening, will travel or accommodate. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424203**

GENUINE, nice man, 60s, 5ft10, n/s, presentable, GSOH, romantic, sincere, many interests, OHAC, seeks attractive feminine soul mate to share TLC and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425465**

SURREY man, 60, n/s, full working order, seeks daytime/evening fun and friendship with slim attractive lady, will travel, discretion assured **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423521**

SINGLE male, 60, n/s, fit, retiring soon, no ties, seeks attractive female for friendship, meetings and more hopefully. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425715**

JAMAICAN male, n/s, lives South East London, various interests seeks female for friendship, possible long-term relationship. **Text only. Mailbox: 4470583**

MALE, 22 years old, mixed race looking for experienced and mature, curvy woman any age up to 48 to have fun and be naughty with. **Text only. Mailbox: 5741065**

KEN, mature, 58, genuine, white, curious male, WLTM white single or widowed lady, 65-75, mature and genuine, for friendship and fun times in private. If you would like a toy boy who is genuine and down to earth, strange request but true, give me a call! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425603**

JAMAICAN male, 68, n/s, likes walking, cinema, theatre, meals out, holidays, seeks slim to medium build West Indian lady for a relationship. Must be n/s, 60-65. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425623**

MALE, 50s, 6ft4, blonde. A 50s/60s circuit singer. Looking for lady of similar age and with good sense of humour. **Text only. Mailbox: 5691198**

MALE seeking friendly, discreet, professional lady, enjoy walks. Rural location preferred. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418135**

JOHN, widower, 65, likes country walks, places of interest, museums, antique fairs, holidays, short breaks, WLTM a slim, n/s lady, 55+, for companionship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425555**

YOUNG 70s guy, n/s, driver, many interests, friendly, social drinker, likes a laugh, seeks friendly lady. Hope you ring me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425533**

MICHAEL, blue eyes, brown hair, would like to meet a caring, loving lady, 45-48, for friendship and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425511**

JOHN, easy going, home owner, n/s, WLTM a similar retired, genuine, attractive lady, for friendship, discretion assured and I will travel. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424091**

MICHAEL, widower, lives in Guildford area, I would love to meet that special lady for company and fun. I hope to be hearing from you soon. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424859**

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YOUNG 70s male, clean, n/s, kind, friendly, many interests, singing, karaoke, seeks a friend to chat with and go out with. Hope you ring me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425531**

SINGLE male, 43, 5ft10, stocky, seeking a larger, busty, sexy woman, size 16 up to size 20, aged 38-50, for no strings adult fun. Any status. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425365**

CHRIS, 49yrs honest gent seeks lady 45-55 for socialising, friendship, maybe leading to romance. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425345**

PROFESSIONAL gent, 44yrs, tall, attractive and genuine. Seeks genuine feminine lady for genuine romance. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425333**

MALCOLM, 60 something gent, own hair and teeth, GSOH, genuine and Kind WLTM sincere lady to wine and dine. Please call. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425335**

Men Seeking

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JOHN, very tactile and very loving, looking for some fun with a local lady, discreet and broadminded, 35-45, to wine and dine. I can meet anytime so leave me a message. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426407**

PROFESSIONAL gentleman, 60s, slim, discreet, WLTM easygoing lady in East Surrey for LTR. No timewasters please. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425439**

GENUINE retired mature single gent, own seaside home, wishes to meet female. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426239**

JOHN, 72, GSOH, own house, WLTM a nice lady with a GSOH, to have fun with and to be a friend and to see what may follow. Good things hopefully! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426391**

WHITE male, 39, into music, movies and travel, seeking slim female, 25-45, for possible long-term relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426229**

ROMANTIC male, 54, caring, honest, likes dancing, cinema , walking, gardening, cooking, holidays and travel, seeks lady for fun and possible long-term relationship. Single mum welcome. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426187**

MALE, 57, good looking, toned, into all kinds of fun, seeks likeminded lady for mutual good times. I prefer younger women. **Text only. Mailbox: 5443614**

TERRY, 58, 5ft11, looking for a broad-minded lady for mutual fun. Call any time. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426013**

MALE, 80s, seeking female company, any age, homely type, single. Will answer all texts. Give it a try. **Text only. Mailbox: 5775094**

BEN, 49, attractive, good physique, 5ft10, good hair, nice smile, seeks lady, younger or mature, who desires occasional, no strings, discreet, passionate times with a nice guy who is understanding, well groomed, intelligent and respectful. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425853**

GENUINE, nice man, 60s, 5ft10, n/s, presentable, GSOH, romantic, sincere, many interests, OHAC, seeks attractive feminine soul mate to share TLC and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425465**

CALLING all ladies 40+ who would like to be wined, dined and romanced by attractive gent, 54 years please call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425943**

PROFESSIONAL gent, mid 60s loves holidays, wining dining, shows in London, seeking similar minded lady to romance. Own house car. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425941**

GENUINE single gent, 55yrs, seeks friendship hopefully leading to true love with lady 35-55, looks unimportant. Please call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425937**

ANDY 6ft, athletic build, seeking sexy lady, voluptuous for fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415163**

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SUB bi guy, 65, well built, 18st, smooth, w/e, WLTM hygienic dom, girls/boys, for regular slave training, fetish fun. No idiots. East Sussex/travel. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426421**

SIMON, 29yrs, gay curious, seeking older gent for new experiences, must be discreet as I live at home. **Text Only: Mailbox: 4196422**

GAY man 40, seeking gay man for friendship, later for relationship, long term, nice time. **Text only. Mailbox: 5793715**

BI male, seeking to meet pre op TS or TV, for no stings attached, local fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422647**

Friends

SLIM straight guy into CD and role-play, WLTM similar for friendship and fun. **Text only Mailbox: 5544057**

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Human-sized robot takes to stage for unusual love story

By Emily King
emily.king@archant.co.uk

SPILLIKIN, a love story containing a robot, is coming to Caterbury following its success at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2015.

Featuring a RoboThespian - a human-sized robot which can interact with people - the production follows the story of a woman with Alzheimer's living with a robot companion.

It's the 1970s. Sally likes Debbie Harry, Raymond likes making robots; they're an unlikely pair. Fifty years later, after a long, childless and sometimes bumpy marriage, Sally has Alzheimer's. Before Raymond died he created a robot, uploaded with his memories, to keep her company. It's the ultimate love letter from beyond the grave: an endlessly patient memory-jogger and singing partner. But as Sally's mind fades, will the robot be more of a comfort or a threat? Spillikin poses big questions about love, death, and technology.

Artistic director and designer for Pipeline, the theatre company behind the play, Alan Munden, has personal experience of Alzheimer's.

He said: "Making work about what you know or desire to better understand, I think lends it integrity. My mother has Alzheimer's. I am frightened when I try to imagine her experience, but intrigued and excited to manifest it on stage, and wish I had the patience of a robot."

After premiering at Edinburgh Fringe Spillikin received a nomination for the prestigious Carol Tambor Best of Edinburgh Award.

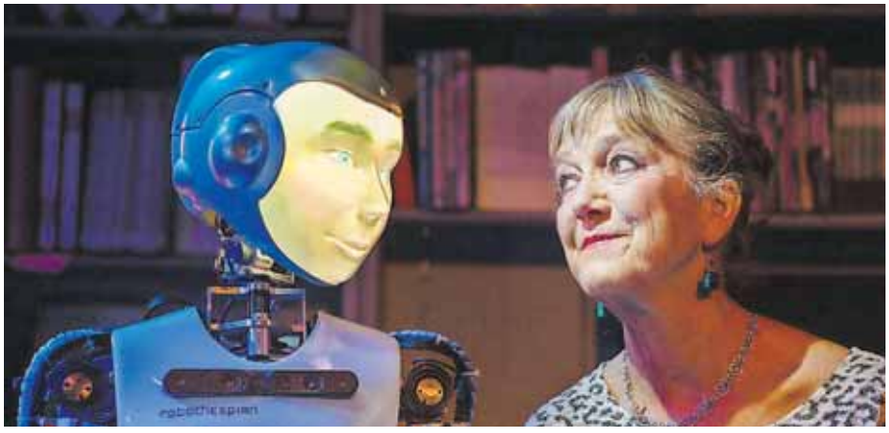
To create Spillikin, Pipeline collaborated with Engineered Arts, a Cornwall-based robotics company, to bring one of their RoboThespians to the stage.

Engineered Arts was founded in 2004 by managing director, Will Jackson. It originally employed local artists and engineers to produce a number of mixed media installations for science centres and museums, but now focuses on providing robots for theatre.

Mr Jackson said: "I've spent a decade designing a piano – now I want someone to write the music."

The show is coming to Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre on March 31.

For tickets or more information visit marlowetheatre.com



LOVE: The robot has been made by a husband before he died, to help his wife with Alzheimers

Pirouetting towards panto

TELEVISION star Louie Spence will lead the cast of this year's family pantomime, Cinderella, at Dartford's Orchard Theatre from December 9.

Tickets are already available from orchardtheatre.co.uk

Winter's visiting in spring

A FOLK DUO are coming to Dartford's Folk Club on March 28.

Formed from the ashes of 90s folk-rock band Ragtrade, Winter Wilson - made up of Dave, and Kip Wilson - went professional with their singing in 2012.

For tickets visit dartfordfolk.org.uk

Solve theatre's mystery

KIDS can be detectives for a day at Margate's Theatre Royal on May 1.

Expect riddles to solve in every corner of the theatre.

Tickets via theatreroyalmargate.com

Eggcellent Easter events

BLUEWATER will be hosting a series of Easter activities and events for families to enjoy from April 1 to 17.

There'll be storytime with Goldilocks, Easter egg hunts, and an oversized bunny welcoming children.

For tickets visit bluewater.co.uk.

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Rush to join Modern Millie

THEATRE star Lucas Rush will join Strictly's Joanne Clifton in Thoroughly Modern Millie on stage in Dartford's Orchard Theatre from Aptil 10 to 15.

For tickets visit orchardtheatre.co.uk

Home-grown talent tour

KESTON COBBLERS CLUB from Bromley, return with their second album, Almost Home, to Ashford's St Mary's Church on April 22. They've recently played Glastonbury, Bestival, and Cambridge Folk Festival.

For more information on tickets and gigs visit kestoncobblersclub.com

Bailey to sing heart out

Former X Factor winner, Sam Bailey, is coming to Dartford's Orchard Theatre on March 31 with her Sing My Heart Out Tour.

For tickets visit the website orchardtheatre.co.uk

Ramblin line-up at the Top

RECENTLY announced as joining ZZ Top on stage at Ramblin Man Festival are U.F.O, new band Toseland, and Scorpion Child.

The outdoor event takes place across July 29 and 30 at Maidstone's Mote Park.

For tickets visit ramblinmanfair17.eventbrite.co.uk/.

Suicide attempt leads to self-penned album

By Emily King
emily.king@archant.co.uk

A SITTINGBOURNE MAN whose battle with depression went viral when he penned a song about it, is releasing an album next month.

Mike Logan Stubbs, 28, wrote Pain No More after a suicide attempt in August 2016, and after recording the song at Big Jam Studios in Sittingbourne, he posted it online for his friends and family to hear. However, the song went viral overnight with views in the thousands.

Mr Stubbs said: "It was amazing, I couldn't believe it got that far. I've been getting hundreds of messages from people in similar situations asking me how I dealt with my depression, and asking for my advice. I've inspired them.

"I wrote the song because I didn't have any other way out of how I was feeling, and it helped me through the hard times. Though my style of music has changed now, its more mellow. I've always written songs but they've been about different things, like breakups. This was the first time I'd written about my depression."

According to the songwriter, his popularity stretches across the world.

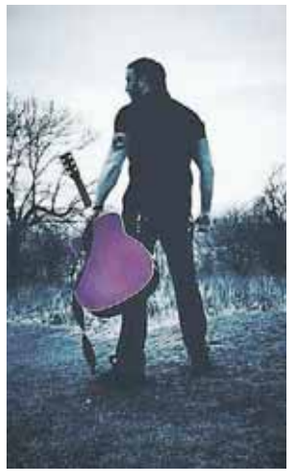
"People started sharing the video, and it's been played on the radio in America. I do get people from America, and Brazil writing to me. And I'm actually in talks with Revolver Records about releasing the album with them too," he says.

The singer, whose self titled album is out mid-April, gets his inspiration from Metallica.

"They sang of experiences with anger, and rehab and then about how they're feeling. I really related to those songs," he added.

Speaking of the advice he gives to his fans, Mr Stubbs said: "The main thing is not to bottle things up inside. Try to make the people around you understand, and explain as best you can how you're feeling. It's also a good idea to seek help from doctors."

To hear his song that took 'the world' by storm, visit youtube.com/mikeloganstubbs.



INSPIRATION: Mr Stubbs claims he's inspired many

FANS: Some of his followers come from America and Brazil

'Food evokes such memories' says chef Allen

With Irish and Scandinavian roots herself, the cook is not surprised the Nordic lifestyle is popular

The world might just be latching on to an idealised Nordic way of life, but chef Rachel Allen has long been fully conversed in it.

Growing up in Dublin, with an Icelandic mum and Irish father, Allen embraced both cultures.

"If it's not the great Nordic [TV] dramas, it's the food, or how to be hygge... It's funny," says the 44-year-old Cork resident with a laugh.

"I read one of those hygge books recently, and actually I identified with every bit of it. I always feel really at home there," the mum-of-three notes of Scandinavia. "I've always loved the design. I've always loved the architecture, the furniture, the fashion, the food.

"I love all the fish and how they use a lot of dill. There's mild aniseed-y flavours, even liquorice is used in food a lot. I love the way they use barley and oats. And baking is something I come back to time and time again. They use quite a lot of cardamom, and I just absolutely adore it. I often find myself sneaking some cardamom and cinnamon into batters."

Allen's mother Hallfridur - a former art student, who was 19 and visiting Dublin for a weekend when she met Allen's father - was a creative cook, and fused Nordic with Irish standards. She'd leave comforting casseroles bubbling away in the Aga, and whip up cardamom-infused cakes.

But central as food is to her life, the chef, is dubious about calling herself a 'foodie'.

HYGGE: Rachel Allen has just released a new cookbook

"When I was growing up, it wasn't about people being 'foodies'," she says. "I was born in the Seventies, it was a different thing then. Mum loved to cook and put food on the table. We didn't go to farmers' markets but we always had great food from the butcher down the road, always lovely casseroles and soups. I took it for granted then, and of course, growing up, you realise, 'Wow, she really did a great job'."

Now, Allen celebrates that 'great job' in her latest cookbook, Recipes From My Mother.

It also draws on the beloved dishes her friends' mums passed down to them, from soda breads, to kedgerees and creamy rice puddings, and acknowledges the influence of her mother-in-law, renowned chef Darina Allen, through their years working together at the famous Ballymaloe Cookery School - which is also where Allen found her calling and met her now-husband Isaac, after enrolling on a course there at 18, and where she still teaches today.

It was a great opportunity to take a stroll down memory lane.

"It's funny how food evokes such emotions and memories and nostalgia for people," she says. "Someone would say, 'I remember we used to always have stewed plums with custard', and then I thought, 'Actually I should be including these lovely recipes as well'. I feel the book is full of memories."

Monthly comedy gig

ASHFORD COMEDY CLUB presents Emmerdale's James Redmond as the host comedian for next month's installment at the Ashford International Hotel on April 28.

Joining Mr Redmond on stage will be Mark Felgate whose performances includes a slew of silly voices, noises and vocal acrobatics, and Alistair Barrie who has taken his comedy all over the world.

For tickets visit thecomedyclub.co.uk.

Blues legend on tour

THE GODFATHER of the blues, John Mayall, will be playing at Tunbridge Wells' Assembly Hall on October 22.

The concert follows on from the release of his latest album Talk About That earlier this year - his 65th album.

The guitarist, and singer rose to fame in the 1960's UK Blues revolution with the his band John Mayall and the Bluesbreakers.

For tickets visit assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk.

Show's Out Of Order

AN UPDATED version of Ray Cooney's Westminster comedy, Out Of Order, is coming to Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre from March 27 to April 1.

The cast includes Marlowe favourite Shaun Williamson (EastEnders, Extras), Andrew Hall (Coronation Street), Susie Amy (Footballers' Wives) and Sue Holderness (Only Fools And Horses, Green Green Grass).

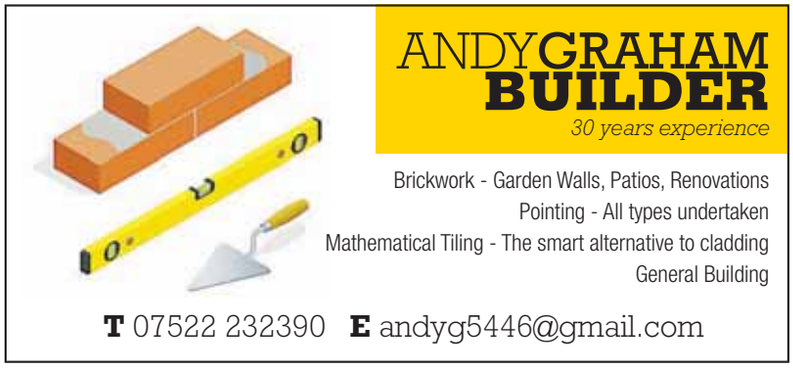
For tickets visit marlowetheatre.com

Pop Idol met Funny Girl

WEST END'S Natasha J Barnes and Pop Idol's Darius Campbell lead the cast of Funny Girl at Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre from May 2 to 6.

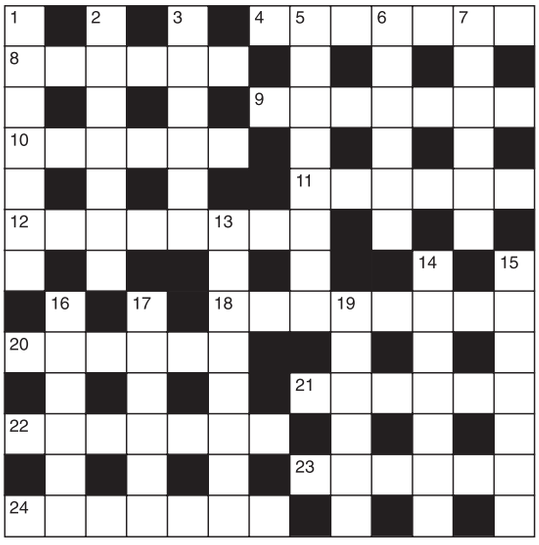
Funny Girl brought global fame to Barbra Streisand 50 years ago and boasts iconic songs including People and Don't Rain On My Parade.

For tickets visit marlowetheatre.com or call 01227 787787.



PUZZLES

DOUBLE CROSSWORD



Quick

Across
4. Show (7)
8. Quantity (6)
9. Clothing (7)
10. Be unlike (6)
11. Proposition (6)
12. Disturb (8)
18. Amaze (8)
20. Serious (6)
21. Flexible (6)
22. Ancient (7)
23. Disconnect (6)
24. Fruitful (7)

Down
1. Frankness (7)
2. Bewilder (7)
3. Notch (6)
5. Powerless (8)
6. Actor (6)
7. Vinegary (6)
13. Calm (8)
14. Repudiate (7)
15. Smash (7)
16. Rebound (6)
17. Portray (6)
19. Rectangular (6)

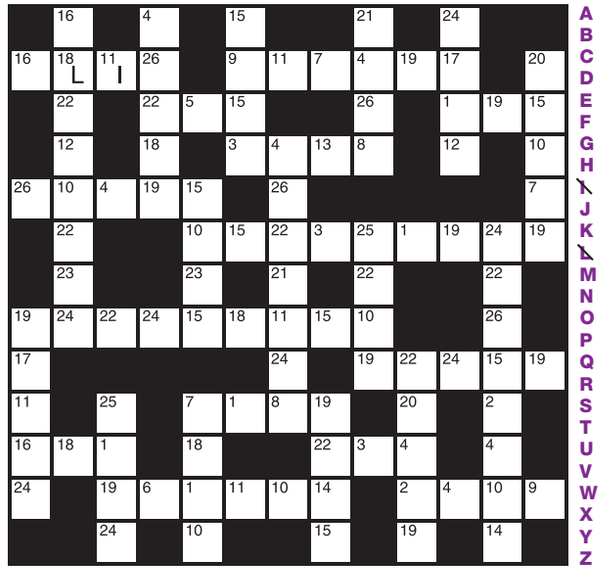
Cryptic

Across
4. Cause a stir when it fills an entrance (7)
8. Harmony produced by one of the strings we hear (6)
9. Acquiring information of the court proceedings (7)
10. Plunder doesn't improve with keeping! (6)
11. Stays where a bed is made up? (6)
12. Got together to make the grade? (8)
18. Final appointment indicating retirement for the private individual! (4,4)
20. This provides entertainment that gives mother a nice change (6)
21. Aspire to unusual commendation (6)
22. Chop a piece off the dog-end! (7)
23. About a class to abandon bad habits (6)
24. All those entitled to look closely a long time (7)

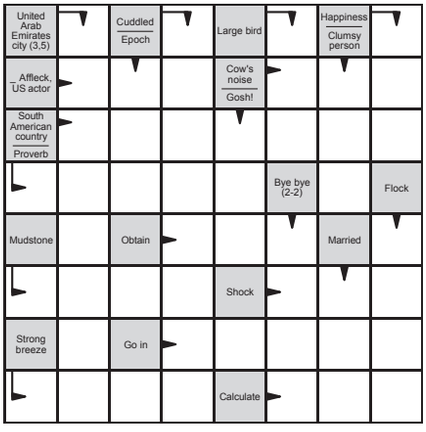
Down
1. Father's wise to provide an extract from the book (7)
2. Is forward with addressing the account with charges (7)
3. Girls upset by eastern fish (6)
5. When they get out of hand they could disturb grandees! (8)
6. Vegetable container found in rubbish dump (6)
7. Signet showing a variety of shades (6)
13. Giving an account connecting one thing with another (8)
14. Plot the activities of a kind of lizard (7)
15. As terms are modified for selected groups of children (7)
16. Is to think about maltreatment (6)
17. Outstanding individual who hasn't yet settled (6)
19. Political group attempts to hold the ring (6)

CODEWORD

This puzzle has no clues. Instead, every number printed in the grid represents a letter, with the same number always representing the same letter.
For example, if 8 turns out to be a V, you can write in V wherever a square contains 8. Using your knowledge of words, complete the puzzle.



Arrowword

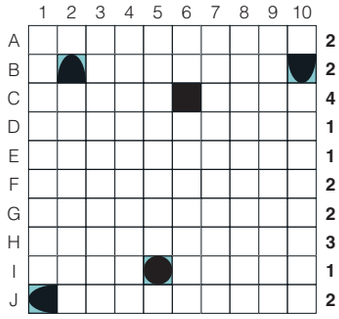


Enter your answers in the direction indicated by the arrows.

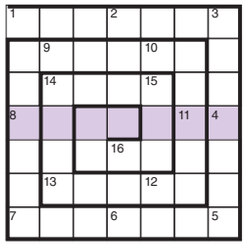
Battleships

Find where ships shown below are hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some of the squares have been filled to start you off.

THE FLEET
1 x Battleship
2 x Cruiser
3 x Destroyer
4 x Submarine



Word Spiral



Starting from 1, fill in the grid clockwise with four-letter words. The last letter of each word becomes the first letter of the next to reveal the key word in the shaded boxes.

1. Ditty
2. Deep cut
3. Quieten
4. Stop
5. Small duck
6. Noisy
7. Podium
8. Brood sullenly
9. Pavement's edge
10. Male voice
11. Heroic narrative
12. Assert
13. Engrossed
14. Melt
15. Delicate strand
16. Scheme

Keyword clue: A language

SUDOKU

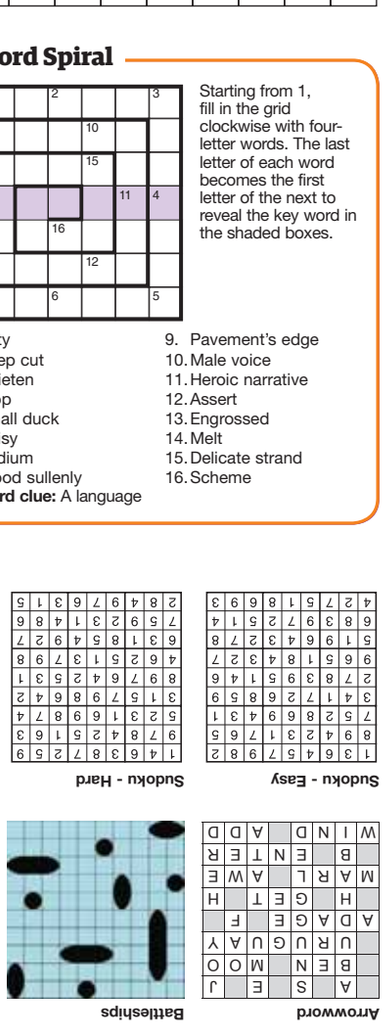
Hard

	4			8			5	
		8	4		5	1		
							7	4
3						6		
		7	6		2	5		
		2						8
6	3							
		9	2		1	4		
	8			7			1	

Easy

1		6	4			9		
	9			3	1		6	
		2		6			3	
	4			2	6	8		9
2	7						4	
		5	1	8			2	
5				4		2		8
	8		9	7			1	4
4		7			8	6		

Solutions



Double Crossword
Cryptic
Across: 4 Agitate; 8 Accord; 9 Hearing; 10 Spoils; 11 Abides; 12 Gathered; 18 Last post; 20 Cinema; 21 Praise; 22 Curtail; 23 Reform; 24 Peerage. Down: 1 Passage; 2 Accosts; 3 Grise; 5 Grenades; 6 Turnip; 7 Tinges; 13 Relating; 14 Monitor; 15 Streams; 16 Misuse; 17 Debtor; 19 Tories. Important; 6 Player; 7 Acetic; 13 Tranquil; 14 Disavow; 15 Shatter; 16 Bounce; 17 Depict; 19 Oblong.
Codeword
1=U, 2=W, 3=D, 4=O, 5=X, 6=O, 7=B, 8=Y, 9=K, 10=R, 11=I, 12=G, 13=Z, 14=M, 15=E, 16=F, 17=H, 18=L, 19=S, 20=V, 21=C, 22=A, 23=N, 24=T, 25=J, 26=P
Word Spiral
1 Song; 2 Gash; 3 Hush; 4 Halt; 5 Teal; 6 Loud; 7 Dais; 8 Sulk; 9 Kerb; 10 Bass; 11 Saga; 12 Aver; 13 Rapt; 14 Thaw; 15 Wisp; 16 Plan.
Keyword: Spanish
Quick
Across: 4 Display; 8 Amount; 9 Apparel; 10 Differ; 11 Thesis; 12 Unsettle; 18 Astonish; 20 Solemn; 21 Pliant; 22 Antique; 23 Unyoke; 24 Fertile. Down: 1 Candour; 2 Confuse; 3 Indent; 5 Tories; 6 Misuse; 7 Podium; 9 Hearing; 10 Male; 11 Epic; 12 Gauge; 13 Tangle; 14 Melt; 15 Delicate; 16 Scheme; 17 Tiny; 19 Ration.
Sudoku - Easy

1	3	6	4	5	7	9	8	2
8	9	4	2	3	1	7	6	5
7	5	2	8	6	9	4	3	1
3	4	1	7	2	6	8	5	9
2	7	8	3	9	5	1	4	6
9	6	5	1	8	4	3	2	7
5	1	9	6	4	3	2	7	8
6	8	3	9	7	2	5	1	4
4	2	7	5	1	8	6	9	3

Sudoku - Hard

1	4	6	3	8	7	2	5	9
9	7	8	4	2	5	1	6	3
5	2	3	1	6	9	8	7	4
3	1	5	7	9	8	6	4	2
8	9	7	6	4	2	5	3	1
4	6	2	5	1	3	7	9	8
6	3	1	8	5	4	9	2	7
7	5	9	2	3	1	4	8	6
2	8	4	9	7	6	3	1	5

Want to shift cellulite? Lifestyle is key

Personal trainer **JULIAN BYNOE** has some diet and exercise tips to help shift troublesome cellulite

FRESH ORGANIC FRUITS AND VEGETABLES **PICTURE:** Getty Images/iStockphoto

Keeping our body fat levels low is imperative to our health. Whether you are wanting to lose a few inches off your waist or lessen the appearance of cellulite it will always be a positive step for your body's overall efficiency. When it comes to cellulite it is true the amount we have is partly genetically determined but the good news is there are active steps we can take to help visibly reduce it. First of all, let's just clear up what cellulite actually is. Cellulite describes fat deposits or pockets of fat that sit just beneath the skin, usually in the thigh, backside and lower torso region. We can't control the genetic aspect to cellulite levels, our age or our fluctuating hormone levels, but there are other contributing factors over which we do have complete control. Our diet choices and our activity levels. Poor diet and a sedentary lifestyle will increase toxin build up, which is stored in the fat cells. Without a good combination of oxygen, activity and essential vitamins shifting cellulite will prove an up hill struggle.

There are many weird and wonderful methods written about and sold, promising to reduce cellulite. Whilst these products have their place in society and their target market, those that know me will also know simple work with applied sports science is my ethos.

So here are my top tips for helping to reduce that orange peel look around our mid-section.

1 **Eat plenty of vegetables** - the vitamins, minerals and antioxidants contained in fruit and vegetables help the body process fats and absorb the proteins we eat. Keeping these levels high will make the body's processes as efficient as possible and help keep us lean.

2 **Doing resistance exercises** raises testosterone levels and promotes lean muscle growth. The more lean our muscle, the more efficient we get at burning calories.

3 **Have a sports massage** to help release the toxins that make fat stores stubborn to shift.

4 **Get active outside** as frequently as possible - the reason for this is that we need oxygen to help break down body fat. The more energy you can expend the more body fat you can shift.

5 **Stay hydrated** - as always water is essential to a healthy lifestyle and will help with the flushing of toxins from the body.

6 **Consume less refined sugars** - these will be present in most processed foods so where possible the sugars we eat should be natural. Too much sugar in our diet can pose a serious health risk in the form of diabetes or strokes as well as adding to any cellulite issues.

7 **Reduce your salt intake** - salt in any form will dehydrate us so by keeping additional salts to a minimum we will be helping keep body fat stores to a minimum.

For information on personal training services available contact me on 07426040580 jtbynoe@yahoo.co.uk

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The man, the legend...he's back

SO now Colin Bullen hedges his bets over climate change [KoS, letters, last week] but I'm afraid it's only deniers and fence sitters, such as himself, who still claim the jury is still out.

The fact is that the cause of global warming has long since been established; as can be verified on many science websites, books and magazines for both professionals and lay people alike. and it is definitely down to humans.

Further, the sun is only about 10 per cent of the cause, orbital changes minimal and, tending towards cooling had we not industrialised using fossil fuels, the so-called pause from 1998-2014 did not in fact occur as studies have shown. C02 levels are now up sharply to 408 parts per million, Arctic winter sea ice is at its lowest level, and February has just been revealed as the second hottest since 1880.

Certainly no-one wants a return to anything like pre-industrial societies, and today's wood burners will have to change too, but still we have to alter the way we produce our electricity. Nuclear fission is far too expensive and produces toxic waste, for which we still haven't agreed a place bury the worst, while safe fusion is probably 50-60 years off and UK research is going to lose its extra EU funding due to Brexit, likely leaving it largely to others like China and France.

Thus fully green renewables are the way forward and indeed a Greenpeace study, based on government 2015 data and the National Infrastructure Commission, suggests that putting modern solar paneling on UK rooftops would need to cover just 827km squared, were it all in one place, to match current UK energy usage.

Further, adding and expanding more wind and marine energy, alongside energy efficiency measures, could provide much more clean energy with decently paid jobs; and these spread far wider and locally across the UK than centralised nuclear or corporate fracking.

As for Mr Baker, he refers to market economics but the neo-liberal version we have has only seen the return of huge inequalities and exacerbated the climate problems both here and around the world.

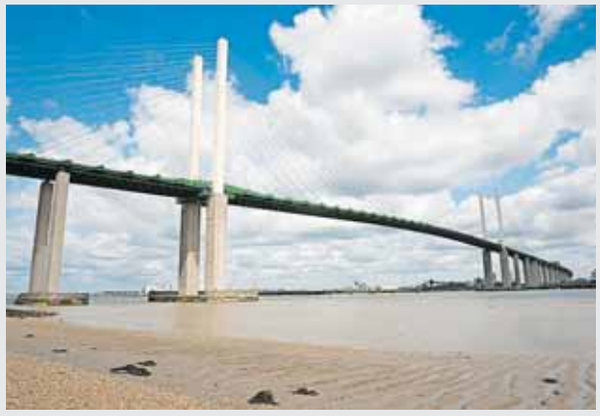
Bangladeshi workers for instance are rightly demanding pay increases but their government and firms typically resist it, whilst all those cheap consumer demanded goods, 90 per cent of world trade, are shipped round the world, as seen in the Channel, with ordinary seafarers on poverty pay and conditions because non-unionised.

Changing this may not be easy, but re-instituting an updated version of Keynesian economics along with modern versions of phased in government funded basic incomes, alongside national minimum wages and ending zero hours contracts, could start to help the low paid.

Shutting down national tax loopholes and closing tax havens, so repatriating the monies stagnating in them, could also help fund the needed changes, as may changing business practices over to more ethical, eco-friendly, co-operative and genuinely fair world trade models.

Ray Duff,
Folkestone

LETTER OF THE WEEK



Dartford is the only real crossing option

REFERRING to KoS last week and the 'last gasp plea' from Dartford's MP and council leader to the transport secretary, Chris Grayling, to choose Option C for the new Thames Crossing:

Last year my wife and I met some friends for a Sunday lunch at a pub in Horndon-on-the-Hill, Essex. It was a lovely warm day so afterwards, instead of heading straight for the motorway, we decided to make our way back to the Dartford Crossing 'cross country'. Whilst doing so we passed through some beautiful countryside and picturesque villages, but from the numerous posters attached to lamp posts etc, stating 'No To Option C', it soon became clear to us that the various communities were protesting hard to protect the environment in which they live.

I have to say, their case seemed wholly justified. It was inconceivable to me that those villages and the surrounding area could even be included for consideration. I am not aware of which area forms the proposal for Option C on the Kent side, however, county councillor Bryan Sweetland choosing to resign his KCC cabinet post suggests that he believes the adverse impact would be much the same in his area on this side of the river too.

Building of new roads is always controversial, but it seems to me in this case the transport secretary should choose the option closest to the present crossing. There will of course be many who will say that will only make the existing problem worse, but as a principle the new crossing should be built where the impact is already apparent.

Apart from congestion the problems that have to be addressed are noise and air pollution, and degradation of the quality of life. From a transport and environmental management point of view, addressing such problems is made easier by confining them to the area where the impact is already apparent.

Christopher Hudson-Gool
Maidstone

Bus changes are just not funny

IN recent weeks, many of the buses operated in Kent by Arriva, which is owned by Deutsche Bahn, have carried large posters announcing that they are 'making changes for the better' to their bus routes, starting from April 2.

One of these changes is to withdraw, apart from school buses, the hourly route 77 from Kings Hill to Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells.

This means that Kings Hill residents will have now have a two-hour trip to Tonbridge via Maidstone, rather than the 30-minute journey at present.

Another 'change for the better' involves extending route 71 from the centre of Snodland to the railway station. However, someone has obviously thought it a good idea to schedule most of the buses to arrive at the station four minutes after the trains have departed in both directions. Who said the Germans don't have a sense of humour?

Jeff Tucker,
Snodlands

Disabled parking should stay free

I AM aggrieved to discover EKHUFT (East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust), are planning to stop free parking for the disabled at their hospitals.

Most disabled people are trying their best to live as 'normal' a life as possible. In recent years society has made much progress towards helping the disabled to do this.

EKHUFT is choosing to do the opposite, making parking no longer free.

Now it will not only add financial worry to the disabled, but to-ing and fro-ing to the ticket machine will add to the pain and difficulty of movement many of us endure.

Has EKHUFT no comprehension or compassion for people already facing extra challenges in life? Shameful.

Betty Renz,
Cliftonville

20mph zones are to make money

READER Martin Stoneham [KoS, last week] is quite right in noticing the increased engine speed in his automatic car when driving at 20mph rather than 30mph.

Generally all vehicles will use more fuel and increase emissions in 20mph zones, especially when starting from cold, so taking longer to get to reach their efficient working temperature.

Plus, of course, with such low speed limits, attention can easy wander, but all of this is of secondary importance, as the main function of 20mph zones, is to get 'people out of their cars' which is clearly stated in all government/council propaganda.

Overnight in Tunbridge Wells, as it went from 30mph to 20mph, thousands of new 'speeders' were created, so of course warranting more enforcement and the escalating sales of speed awareness courses.

Figures for 20mph speed awareness courses are 1,380 (in 2014), 8,229 (2015), 17,139(2016).

Terry Hudson,
Whitstable

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

Kent on Sunday will:

1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
3) Be written in clear, concise English.
4) Not be overly sensational.
5) Have a sense of humour.
6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.

images of kent

Bridge over river at Aylesford

by **Alan Smithers**

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from
£699pp

Andernach, Cochem, Boppard, Rudesheim, Koblenz, Konigswinter & Cologne

By Rail from Ebbsfleet or Air from Gatwick

4 & 25 June, 3 Sept & 11 Oct, 2017 - Quote: RH-KOS

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£649pp

By Air from Gatwick

11 August, 2017 - Quote: IM8-KOS

A truly unique Island, the Isle of Man isn't part of the United Kingdom or the European Union but a possession of the British Crown. Situated between the coasts of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, in the middle of the Irish Sea, it boasts stunning coastlines, rich countryside and picturesque towns rich in folklore and culture. This holiday includes visits to Castle Rushem, Silverdale Glen Waterwheel and Peel and includes journeys on the Isle of Man Steam Railway, the Manx Electric Railway and the Snaefell Mountain Railway.

INCLUDED: Escorted throughout • Return flights with hand luggage to the Isle of Man from a choice of UK airports - supp't may apply • 4 nights stay at the 3 star Rutland Hotel, Douglas • 4 breakfasts & 4 dinners • Excursions as stated • Journeys on Isle of Man Steam Railway, Manx Electric Railway and Snaefell Mountain Railway • Airport to hotel transfer on arrival and departure

60s Rock the Rhine Christmas Markets River Cruise

5 days
full board
plus from
£699pp

Boppard, Rüdesheim, Mainz, Koblenz & Cologne

By Rail from Ebbsfleet or Air from Gatwick

5 December, 2017 - Quote SP12-KOS

Join us on a fun and friendly cruise down memory lane as we party to 60s sounds with a star tribute artiste and GN's entertainment team along the magnificent Rhine. Our cruise on board the 4-star ms Swiss Pearl takes in magical Christmas markets in the riverside towns of Koblenz, Rüdesheim and Mainz, plus the popular town of Boppard with a Christmas shop open all year. These lovely attractions are just a stroll from the ship, so there's no coach transfers or optional excursions to buy.

INCLUDED: 60s music themed entertainment programme • House wine, draft beer, juices, soft drinks, water, tea & coffee from the bar 10am to 1am daily, and served at lunch & dinner • Escorted Return Eurostar travel from St Pancras and Ebbsfleet OR return flights from a choice of UK airports - supp't may apply • 4 nights full board plus cruise on the 4-star ms Swiss Pearl • Transfers abroad • Services of our Cruise Director on board

Rhine New Year Party River Cruise

5 days
full board
PLUS from
£749pp

Cologne, Koblenz & Rüdesheim

By Rail from Ebbsfleet or Air from Gatwick

29 December, 2017 - Quote RN12-KOS

Welcome in the New Year with the splendours and stunning scenery along the Rhine on this relaxing river cruise on board the 4-star Mps Switzerland II which hosts you in style with all meals, selected free drinks and entertainment in an informal, fun and friendly atmosphere. This holiday visits the famous towns of Cologne, Koblenz, and Rüdesheim where we welcome in the New Year with a celebration dinner and entertainment.

INCLUDED: Entertainment • Beer, wine by the glass, and soft drinks served at lunch and dinner and from 10am to 1am at the bar • Escorted rail travel from St Pancras and Ebbsfleet OR return flights with luggage from a choice of UK airports - supp't may apply • 4-nights full board cruise on the 4-star MPS Switzerland II • Transfers abroad • Services of our Cruise Director on board

*Conditions apply to low deposits - please call for details

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driving

By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

CHANGES: Flexible Japanese marque picks the sectors it wants to contest, concentrating on well-priced smaller models and 4x4s

Transformation of Suzuki continues with latest Swift

SUZUKI has transformed itself over recent years.

It was always a brand offering customer satisfaction, value and reliability, but the Japanese marque's cars are now far more interesting and good to drive.

The Swift supermini has been pivotal here after Suzuki recognised that the long-running model name was previously anything but swift in terms of technology, style or momentum.

So, it was taken in hand two generations ago and recast as, pound for pound, the market's most entertaining supermini – the latest generation car arrives on June 1.

The distinctive wrap-around screen and squat shape is derived from its predecessors and 10mm shorter, yet it has a 20mm longer wheelbase for a more spacious cabin. It also sits 15mm lower and 40mm wider on the road for a more purposeful look, which bodes well for when the inevitable performance-orientated Sport model appears.

Suzuki has also dropped a three-door option, but the five-door model has the rear door handles concealed within the door pillars to please those who like a 'coupe look'.

The latest Swift will have competition of course, not least from its own sister models; as self-styled 'small car experts' the Suzuki brand has four more minimal models if you include the UK's smallest and cheapest true 4x4 off-roader, the long-running but still highly capable Jimny.

The other 'minis' are the Celerio, the 'maxi' supermini Baleno, and the newly launched SUV-style Ignis, a budget rival to image makers like the MINI, FIAT 500 and DS3.

Rather than compete in all market sectors, Suzuki also seeks to fight the booming SUV/crossover arena with two candidates: the well-equipped but affordable Vitara SUV and newly facelifted S-Cross, which undercuts the crossover market founder and leader, the Nissan Qashqai.

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ARCHANT

Hyundai's Ioniq - better than a Prius?

The Korean brand team has done it again: confounded the opposition with a well-conceived and executed newcomer – this time, a classy hybrid equivalent

AMBITIOUS Korean brand Hyundai has created an alternative fuel car that doesn't call for a complete change of faith from would-be owners.

It is a new age motoring chameleon: the world's first car to be offered in hybrid (from prices of £19,995), plug-in hybrid (arriving soon) and all-electric (from prices of £24,495) formats.

It wears a slippery five-door hatchback body with a 0.24 drag coefficient; better than most production cars and matching those green icons, the Toyota Prius and all-electric Tesla Model S.

And it is sufficiently futuristic to catch the eye, without looking ill-proportioned like its obvious rival the Prius – the world's most famous hybrid.

At least it counters my conspiracy theory that established carmakers don't produce good looking alternative motors, for fear we will stampede away from their main profit source, fossil fuel cars.

The Ioniq's real-world appeal continues inside; it drives more conventionally than the Prius thanks to a swift and smooth-changing six-speed twin-clutch automatic gearbox with more driver appeal than the Toyota.

In the latter, the driver feels detached from the car due to the continuously-variable auto transmission (CVT) and lifeless steering, though even the Ioniq suffers from the latter too.

The Ioniq's combined 140bhp powertrain makes the hybrid lively (0-62mph in 10.8 seconds), while the chassis strikes a good balance between taut for better handling and soft for a serene ride, though it is not immune to poor surfaces.

If you flick the gearbox shift to manual or 'Sport' mode you learn two things: that the Ioniq can indeed get a sprint on, with a muffled growl from the 104bhp four-cylinder 1.6-litre petrol engine too, but the suspension is too pliant to prevent some cornering lean and probably not helped by the weight of the electric powertrain and batteries.

Looking around the Ioniq's cabin, there is the expected Hyundai quality materials, thankfully devoid of the Apple Computer inspired white trim that mars the Prius cabin. Hyundai clearly wants hybrid ownership to be as attractive as possible whether viewed from outside or inside.

One possible penalty from the car's good looks is the rakish rear roofline stealing some headroom, but the 443-litre boot is generous and not robbed by a battery compartment.

In short, the Ioniq is a new age car that anyone can buy and feel comfortable with.

Hyundai Ioniq Hybrid Premium

Price:	from £23,595
Driving appeal:	★★★
Image:	★★★★
Space:	★★★★
Value:	★★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★★
How green?:	★★★★★
Best rival:	Toyota Prius

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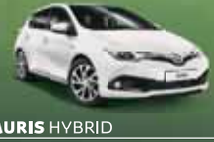

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Motability

*Verso Active 1.6 V-matic Manual at NIL Advance Payment. Model shown is a Verso Icon 7-Seat 1.6 V-matic Manual at £95 Advance Payment. AYGO x-press 5 door 1.0 VVT-i at NIL Advance Payment, Yaris Icon 5 door 1.4 D-4D Manual at NIL Advance Payment, Yaris Hybrid Icon 5 door 1.5 VVT-i Auto at NIL Advance Payment, and Auris Hybrid Icon 5 door 1.8 VVT-i Auto at £495 Advance Payment. Subject to availability. Please note that a total of 60,000 miles over three years are allowed on the Motability Contract Hire Scheme. Offer valid between 1st January and 31st March 2017. Available as part of the Motability Contract Hire Scheme.

Verso Icon 7-Seat 1.6 V-matic Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 32.8 (8.6), Extra Urban 49.6 (5.7), Combined 41.5 (6.8). CO_2 Emissions 157g/km. AYGO x-press 5 door 1.0 VVT-i x-shift. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 56.5 (5.0), Extra Urban 78.5 (3.6), Combined 68.9 (4.1). CO_2 Emissions 95g/km. Yaris Icon 5 door 1.4 D-4D Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 67.3 (4.2), Extra Urban 91.1 (3.1), Combined 80.7 (3.5). CO_2 Emissions 91/km. Yaris Hybrid Icon 5 door 1.5 VVT-i Auto. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 91.1 (3.1), Extra Urban 85.6 (3.3), Combined 85.6 (3.3). CO_2 Emissions 75g/km. Auris Hybrid Icon 5 door 1.8 VVT-i Auto. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 80.7 (3.5) Extra Urban 80.7 (3.5) Combined 78.5 (3.6). CO_2 Emissions 82g/km. All mpg and CO_2 figures quoted are sourced from official EU regulated laboratory test results. These are provided to allow comparisons between vehicles and may not reflect your actual driving experience.

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Danielle Edwards, Business Office Supervisor on 01304 222672

Physiotherapist – Margate and Ashford

Full Time 37.5 hrs per week - Salary - £27,000 - £29,000
Closing Date – 03/04/2017 - Interview Date – 12/04/2017

Qualifications and Experience

- BSc or Equivalent in Physiotherapy
- Member of CSP
- Current HCPC Registration
- Relevant post graduate experience
- Proven clinical experience in the delivery of orthopaedic and MSK physiotherapy

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact:
Adebayo Tijani, Physiotherapy Manager on 01843 253172

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Alternatively, please contact Carina Pieries, HR Assistant
Telephone: 01304 222687 E-mail: recruitment@spencerhospitals.com

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This position is subject to a Disclosure and Barring check.

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Physiotherapist

Margate and Ashford

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Spencer PRIVATE HOSPITALS

Gillespie joins as interim assistant

The move was made with Allan Donald still awaiting a visa

Cricket

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

A FORMER Australia fast bowler has been appointed to Kent's coaching staff as the start of the county championship season approaches.

Jason Gillespie, 41, joins head coach Matt Walker and the first-team squad as interim assistant coach ahead of the county's first competitive fixture on Friday, April 7.

The move was made with former South Africa test paceman Allan Donald - appointed assistant coach in January - still awaiting a visa to work in the UK.

The former Yorkshire head coach took more than 800 wickets in a 15-year professional career including 71 tests and 97 one-day internationals for Australia.

He has coached at Kings XI Punjab in the Indian Premier League and Adelaide Strikers in the Big Bash League as well as winning back-to-back County Championships with Yorkshire in 2014 and 2015.

"I am really looking forward to joining Kent," Gillespie said.

"Obviously I moved back to Adelaide for family reasons last year but the opportunity to assist Kent on a short-term basis was one that I couldn't resist and works well with my current situation.

"I look forward to helping Matt Walker and Sam Northeast over the next couple of months until I hand over the reigns to Allan."

Walker said: "To get Jason on board is a brilliant coup for us.

"To have an experienced ex-head coach come into our ranks is great for me and the lads.

"His bowling expertise are like-for-like with Allan."

Kent Cricket CEO Jamie Clifford added: "We're delighted to welcome Jason to the team.

"He brings a wealth of experience as a player and coach in England and overseas.

"It's unfortunate that a world-class coach, Allan, is unable to join us as planned due to bureaucratic barriers but Jason will be a fine addition to the staff."

Meanwhile, the county's seam bowler Charlie Hartley says he is raring to go after a short stint playing Twenty20 cricket in Tanzania.

HOME: Kent's Spitfire Ground, St Lawrence in Canterbury

Scally unveils latest plans for Gills stadium

Football

GILLINGHAM chairman Paul Scally says he is set to publish plans outlining a renewed bid to build a new multi-purpose stadium for the League One club, insisting it could be the answer to becoming an eventual Premier League team.

The owner has long championed plans to sell Priestfield and create a new home for the club with an increased capacity and revenue generating bolt-ons.

In a newsletter sent to fans this week, he explained his enthusiasm was still strong and says Medway Council has been "very supportive" of his vision.

Mr Scally explains: "Within the next few months I will be publishing my plans for relocation, what it will involve and what will be included.

"I will be outlining how we envisage we will carry out construction and by then I should have news on investment in the scheme and the club. I am currently in talks with several potential funders, all of whom understand the needs of the club, to progress in line with a new stadium and enabling development.

"So long as I have an ounce of energy left in my body I will give this club the best and only chance of achieving its potential in Medway and thus putting itself in a position in a new arena to chase Premier League glory for the benefit of everyone in Medway for the next 100 years and more.

"It's not impossible – in fact it's getting more realistic by the day; just look at Brighton & Hove Albion and Bournemouth as case studies of how fortunes can be transformed."

BOSS: Paul Scally

Sport Shorts

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Rugby star Francis in Northampton switch

AVIVA Premiership club Northampton have announced the signing of Auckland Blues' Kent-born back Piers Francis.

Francis, a fly-half or centre who grew up in Gravesend and used to play for Maidstone, headed to New Zealand eight years ago and was part of the Auckland Academy before moving on to play in the National Provincial Championship and then Super Rugby.

He has played in all four rounds of this year's Super Rugby competition, and he will move to Saints ahead of next season.

Francis, meanwhile, is likely to be part of the Blues squad set to face the British and Irish Lions in Auckland on June 7.

"Piers is a player who has been very impressive over the past couple of years," said rugby director Jim Mallinder.

"He is a very good playmaker who is comfortable with ball in hand, but who can also control a match with his kicking game, too. He has all the talent and temperament that it takes to be a success in the Premiership."

STAR: Piers Francis

VENUE: Conningbrook Lakes

Conningbrook Lakes given RYA recognition

A KENT sailing club is now officially recognised as a training centre by a national body.

Started in October 2015, Conningbrook Lakes Sailing Centre in Ashford recently passed its first Royal Yachting Association (RYA) inspection and has now been granted RYA Training Centre status.

Courses are offered for children aged eight and upwards, youth and adults in dinghy sailing, as well as powerboat courses for those who would like to help with the safety boat.

East Kent Yachting Association chairman Helen Hofmann said: "This shows Conningbrook offers qualified instruction with monitored safety procedures, ensuring we are providing both a safe and enjoyable time on the water."

Former Stoke striker joins Dover

FORMER Stoke City striker Peter Skapetis has joined Dover Athletic to help the club's National League promotion push.

The 21-year-old trained with the Whites this week after being released by the Premier League side last summer.

Stoke paid QPR £300,000 for him in 2014 after he joined the west London club from South Melbourne in 2012.

The former Australia U20 and U23 star has also had trials with Derby County, Sheffield United and Cardiff City.

Elsewhere, promising young midfielder Christopher Barnard has extended his deal at Crabble until May 2018.

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